Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

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(Continued on the inside of the back cover.)

Editor's Note: The President was in LaCrosse, WI, on May 7, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, May 7, 2004

Proclamation 7776—Older Americans Month, 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More than 47 million Americans are 60 years old or older. During Older Americans Month, we honor our senior citizens for enriching and strengthening our Nation, and we pledge to continue working to enhance their quality of life.

This year's theme, "Aging Well, Living Well," reflects the many ways that older Americans contribute to our national character. Many are working beyond traditional retirement age, while others volunteer their time serving worthy causes. Through the Senior Corps program of the USA Freedom Corps, more than half a million older Americans donated time to their communities last year, and many others are volunteering through the Peace Corps and other programs.

My Administration is committed to helping our senior citizens lead better, healthier, and longer lives. Late last year, I was proud to sign into law the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003. This historic legislation represents the greatest improvement in senior health care since President Lyndon Johnson signed the Social Security Act Amendments that created Medicare in 1965. It gives seniors access to affordable prescription drug coverage, provides for preventive screenings to diagnose and treat health conditions early, and updates the Medicare system to let seniors choose coverage that best meets their needs. These changes are vital to ensuring that seniors can obtain the health care and prescription drugs they deserve.

Older Americans help others to understand the past, and they teach timeless lessons of courage, endurance, and love. Through their legacy of patriotism, service, and responsibility, America's seniors also unite families and communities and serve as role models for younger generations.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2004 as Older Americans Month. I commend older Americans for the contributions they make to our communities. I further commend Federal officials, State, and local governments, tribal organizations, service and health care providers, caregivers, volunteers, and all those who work on behalf of our senior citizens. I encourage all Americans to honor their elders and publicly reaffirm our Nation's commitment to older Americans during this month and throughout the year.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7777—National Charter Schools Week, 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America looks to its schools to give all students the skills they need to realize their

dreams and reach their potential. Charter schools help fulfill this mission. During National Charter Schools Week, we celebrate the successes of these institutions.

Charter schools are an important part of our effort to improve the public school system and offer broader educational options to every family. Like other public schools, charter schools are open to all students. Because they are subject to fewer State and district regulations than other public schools, charter schools offer teachers and administrators more freedom in tailoring programs to meet specific student and community needs. In exchange for this freedom, they must meet stricter accountability standards.

Now in their second decade, the demand for charter schools is growing among families from all backgrounds. During this school year, our Nation's charter schools will educate nearly 700,000 students. Many families choose charter schools because of the innovative curriculum and focus on academic achievement, and because these schools can be a promising alternative to a low-performing neighborhood school.

Charter schools are an important part of the No Child Left Behind Act. They provide parents with more choices for their children's education. The greater autonomy of charter schools allows them to employ innovative educational practices. Studies have shown that many charter schools improve academic achievement for their students and that parents of students in charter schools are satisfied with their children's schools.

My fiscal year 2005 budget includes an overall 49 percent increase for elementary and secondary education over 2001 levels, and it proposes $219 million for charter school grants and $100 million for charter school facilities. Together, funding for these two charter school programs has increased 68 percent over 2001 levels. By raising expectations, insisting on results, and refusing to accept failure, we are strengthening our public schools and improving education for all children in America.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2 through May 8, 2004, as National Charter Schools Week. I commend our Nation's charter schools, and I call on parents of charter school students to share their successes to help all Americans understand more about the important work of charter schools.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

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Proclamation 7778—Law Day, U.S.A., 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The theme of this year's Law Day, "To Win Equality by Law: *Brown v. Board* at 50," celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The Declaration of Independence declared the equality of each person before God and the responsibility of Government to secure the rights of all. However, it was not until ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1868 that the equality of all citizens under law was guaranteed by the Constitution. Still, for decades afterwards, millions of African-American citizens were subjected to shameful discrimination, and in many public school systems, students were segregated by race. Finally, in the 1954 *Brown* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that segregating students in our public schools violated our Constitution.

Our Nation is grateful for the brave men and women and boys and girls who challenged segregation and helped make equal justice under law a reality for all Americans.

We remember Thurgood Marshall, the heroic lawyer who represented Linda Brown and fought for her rights and the rights of all African Americans. We remember the nine justices of the Supreme Court of the United States who helped America begin to make equal justice under law a reality for African Americans.

Nearly 50 years after *Brown*, we appreciate the progress America has made, but we also recognize that there is still work to be done to ensure that our country lives up to the founding principle that all of God's children are created equal. As we observe this Law Day and commemorate the anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, I encourage all Americans to celebrate the great distance we have traveled as a Nation and to continue our work to promote equality and opportunity for all.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87–20, as amended, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2004, as Law Day, U.S.A. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also call upon Government officials to display the flag of the United States in support of this national observance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

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Proclamation 7779—Loyalty Day, 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As Americans, we work to preserve the freedom declared by our Founding Fathers, defended by generations, and granted to every man and woman on Earth by the Almighty. On Loyalty Day, we are reminded that we are citizens with obligations to our country, to each other, and to our great legacy of freedom and democracy.

We learn lessons of loyalty from the selfless dedication and unwavering allegiance of our men and women in uniform. We are grateful for their courage and willingness to sacrifice for our country, and we stand united behind them. Through the "On the Homefront" program, a USA Freedom Corps initiative, many Americans are writing to service members, contributing to the purchase of care packages to be sent overseas, and helping the families of those deployed with basic family needs such as home repairs, financial planning, and child care. By supporting our troops and their families, citizens are making a difference in their communities and showing loyalty to our country through their patriotism.

America's citizens are also demonstrating their loyalty to our Nation through volunteer service. In answering the call to serve something greater than self, Americans reflect the compassion and decency that make our country great. Through the USA Freedom Corps, my Administration is providing information about volunteer opportunities to Americans so they can give back to their communities and help their fellow citizens in need. The hard work and generosity of America's volunteers help build a culture of service and responsible citizenship that strengthens America and sets a positive example for future generations.

Over the past few years, America has once again witnessed the loyalty and character of our citizens. We must continue to ensure that our young people know the great cause of freedom and why it is worth defending. Our Founders believed the study of history and citizenship should be at the core of every American's education. By encouraging students to learn more about American history and values, we can help prepare the next generation of Americans to carry our heritage of freedom into the future. To further this goal, my Administration has created initiatives such as "We the People" and "Our Documents" to help bring the stories and documents central to our history into the modern classroom.

Loyalty Day encourages citizens to demonstrate their commitment to our country by supporting our military, serving each other, and teaching our young people about our history and values. Being an American is a privilege, and our patriotism is a living faith in our country's founding ideals and the promise of the American Dream.

The Congress, by Public Law 85–529, as amended, has designated May 1 of each year as "Loyalty Day," and I ask all Americans to join me in this day of celebration and in reaffirming our allegiance to our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2004, as Loyalty Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to join in support of this national observance. I also call upon government officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on Loyalty Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7780—National Day of Prayer, 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In his first Inaugural Address, President George Washington prayed that the Almighty would preserve the freedom of all Americans. On the National Day of Prayer, we celebrate that freedom and America's great tradition of prayer. The National Day of Prayer encourages Americans of every faith to give thanks for God's many blessings and to pray for each other and our Nation.

Prayer is an opportunity to praise God for His mighty works, His gift of freedom, His mercy, and His boundless love. Through prayer, we recognize the limits of earthly power and acknowledge the sovereignty of God. According to Scripture, "the Lord is near to all who call upon Him . . . He also will hear their cry, and save them." Prayer leads to humility and a grateful heart, and it turns our minds to the needs of others.

On this National Day of Prayer, we pray especially for the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who are serving around the world to defend the cause of liberty. We are grateful for their courage and sacrifice and ask God to comfort their families while they are away from home. We also pray that the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, and throughout the Greater Middle East, may live in safety and freedom. During this time, we continue to ask God's blessing for our Nation, granting us strength to meet the challenges ahead and wisdom as we work to build a more peaceful future for all.

The Congress, by Public Law 100–307, as amended, has called on our citizens to reaffirm the role of prayer in our society by recognizing annually a "National Day of Prayer."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 6, 2004, as a National Day of Prayer. I ask the citizens of our Nation to give thanks, each according to his or her own faith, for the freedoms and blessings we have received and for God's continued guidance and protection. I also

urge all Americans to join in observing this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Executive Order 13337—Issuance of Permits With Respect to Certain Energy-Related Facilities and Land Transportation Crossings on the International Boundaries of the United States

April 30, 2004

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and in order to amend Executive Order 11423 of August 16, 1968, as amended, and to further the policy of my Administration as stated in Executive Order 13212 of May 18, 2001, as amended, to expedite reviews of permits as necessary to accelerate the completion of energy production and transmission projects, and to provide a systematic method for evaluating and permitting the construction and maintenance of certain border crossings for land transportation, including motor and rail vehicles, that do not require construction or maintenance of facilities connecting the United States with a foreign country, while maintaining safety, public health, and environmental protections, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. (a) Except with respect to facilities covered by Executive Order 10485 of September 3, 1953, and Executive Order 10530 of May 10, 1954, the Secretary of State is hereby designated and empowered to receive all applications for Presidential permits, as referred to in Executive Order 11423, as amended, for the construction, connection, operation, or maintenance, at the borders of the United States, of facilities for the exportation or importation of petroleum, petroleum products, coal, or other fuels to or from a foreign country.

(b) Upon receipt of a completed application pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary of State shall:

(i) Request additional information needed from the applicant, as appropriate, before referring the application to other agencies pursuant to paragraph (b)(ii) of this section;

(ii) Refer the application and pertinent information to, and request the views of, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, or the heads of the departments or agencies in which the relevant authorities or responsibilities of the foregoing are subsequently conferred or transferred, and, for applications concerning the border with Mexico, the United States Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission; and

(iii) Refer the application and pertinent information to, and request the views of, such other Federal Government department and agency heads as the Secretary of State deems appropriate.

(c) All Federal Government officials consulted by the Secretary of State pursuant to paragraph (b)(ii) or (b)(iii) of this section shall provide their views and render such assistance as may be requested, consistent with their authority, in a timely manner, but not to exceed 90 days from the date of the request.

(d) Should any of the Federal Government officials consulted pursuant to paragraph (b)(ii) or (b)(iii) of this section request from the Department of State additional information that is necessary for them to provide their views or to render such assistance as may be required, the time elapsed between

the date of that request for additional information and the date such additional information is received shall not be counted in calculating the time period prescribed in paragraph (c) of this section.

(e) The Secretary of State may also consult with such State, tribal, and local government officials and foreign governments, as the Secretary deems appropriate, with respect to each application. The Secretary shall solicit responses in a timely manner, not to exceed 90 days from the date of the request.

(f) Upon receiving the views and assistance requested pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (e) of this section, the Secretary of State shall consider, in light of any statutory or other requirements or other considerations, whether or not additional information is needed in order to evaluate the application and, as appropriate, request such information from the applicant.

(g) After consideration of the views and assistance obtained pursuant to paragraphs (b) and, as appropriate, (e) and (f) of this section and any public comments submitted pursuant to section 3(a) of this order, if the Secretary of State finds that issuance of a permit to the applicant would serve the national interest, the Secretary shall prepare a permit, in such form and with such terms and conditions as the national interest may in the Secretary's judgment require, and shall notify the officials required to be consulted under paragraph (b)(ii) of this section of the proposed determination that a permit be issued.

(h) After consideration of the views obtained pursuant to paragraphs (b) and, as appropriate, (e) and (f) of this section and any public comments provided pursuant to section 3(a) of this order, if the Secretary of State finds that issuance of a permit to the applicant would not serve the national interest, the Secretary shall notify the officials required to be consulted under paragraph (b)(ii) of this section of the proposed determination that the application be denied.

(i) The Secretary of State shall issue or deny the permit in accordance with the proposed determination unless, within 15 days after notification pursuant to paragraphs (g) or (h) of this section, an official required to be consulted under paragraph (b)(ii) of this section shall notify the Secretary of State that he or she disagrees with the Secretary's proposed determination and requests the Secretary to refer the application to the President. In the event of such a request, the Secretary of State shall consult with any such requesting official and, if necessary, shall refer the application, together with statements of the views of any official involved, to the President for consideration and a final decision.

Sec. 2. (a) Section 1(a) of Executive Order 11423, as amended, is amended to read as follows: "Except with respect to facilities covered by Executive Order Nos. 10485 and 10530, and by section 1(a) of the Executive Order of April 30, 2004, entitled "Issuance of Permits with Respect to Certain Energy-Related Facilities and Land Transportation Crossings on the International Boundaries of the United States" (the order of April 30, 2004), the Secretary of State is hereby designated and empowered to receive all applications for Presidential permits for the construction, connection, operation, or maintenance, at the borders of the United States, of:

(i) pipelines, conveyor belts, and similar facilities for the exportation or importation of all products, except those specified in section 1(a) of the order of April 30, 2004, to or from a foreign country;

(ii) facilities for the exportation or importation of water or sewage to or from a foreign country;

(iii) facilities for the transportation of persons or things, or both, to or from a foreign country;

(iv) bridges, to the extent that congressional authorization is not required;

(v) similar facilities above or below ground; and

(vi) border crossings for land transportation, including motor and rail vehicles, to or from a foreign country, whether or not in conjunction with the facilities identified in (iii) above.

(b) Section 1(b) of Executive Order 11423, as amended, is amended by deleting the text "(a)(iii), (iv), or (v)" and by inserting the text "(a)(iii), (iv), (v), or (vi)" in lieu thereof.

Sec. 3. (a) The Secretary of State may provide for the publication in the *Federal Register* of notice of receipt of applications, for the receipt of public comments on applications, and for notices related to the issuance or denial of applications.

(b) The Secretary of State is authorized to issue such further rules and regulations, and to prescribe such further procedures, including, but not limited to, those relating to the International Boundary and Water Commission, as may from time to time be deemed necessary or desirable for the exercise of the authority conferred by this order.

Sec. 4. All permits heretofore issued with respect to facilities described in section 2(a) of this order pursuant to Executive Order 11423, as amended, and in force at the time of issuance of this order, and all permits issued hereunder, shall remain in effect in accordance with their terms unless and until modified, amended, suspended, or revoked by the appropriate authority.

Sec. 5. Nothing contained in this order shall be construed to affect the authority of any department or agency of the United States Government, or to supersede or replace the requirements established under any other provision of law, or to relieve a person from any requirement to obtain authorization from any other department or agency of the United States Government in compliance with applicable laws and regulations subject to the jurisdiction of that department or agency.

Sec. 6. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 30, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address
May 1, 2004

Good morning. A year ago, I declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq, after coalition forces conducted one of the swiftest, most successful and humane campaigns in military history. I thanked our troops for their courage and for their professionalism. They had confronted a gathering danger to our Nation and the world. They had vanquished a brutal dictator who had twice invaded neighboring countries, who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, and who had supported and financed terrorism. On that day, I also cautioned Americans that, while a tyrant had fallen, the war against terror would go on.

One year later, despite many challenges, life for the Iraqi people is a world away from the cruelty and corruption of Saddam's regime. At the most basic level of justice, people are no longer disappearing into political prisons, torture chambers, and mass graves because the former dictator is in prison, himself. And their daily life is improving. Electricity is now more widely available than before the war. Iraq has a stable currency, and banks are thriving. Schools and clinics have been renovated and reopened, and powerplants, hospitals, water and sanitation facilities, and bridges are being rehabilitated. Iraq's oil infrastructure is being rebuilt, with the Iraqi oil industry already producing about 2.5 million barrels per day.

On the ground in Iraq, we have serious and continuing challenges. Illegal militias and remnants of the regime, joined by foreign terrorists, are trying to take by force the power they could never gain by the ballot. These groups have found little support among the Iraqi people.

Our coalition is implementing a clear strategy in Iraq. First, we will ensure an atmosphere of security as Iraqis move toward self-government. Our coalition supports the efforts of local Iraqis to negotiate the disarmament of the radicals in Fallujah. We've also made it clear that militias in Najaf and elsewhere must disarm or face grave consequences. American and coalition forces are in place, and we are prepared to enforce order in Iraq.

The second element of our strategy is to return sovereignty to the people of Iraq on the schedule that we agreed to with the Iraqi Governing Council. Like any proud people, Iraqis want to manage their own affairs, and that is a goal we share. On June 30th, a sovereign Iraqi interim government will take office. Iraqis will assume all administrative duties now performed by the coalition. Since February, United Nations Special Adviser Lakhdar Brahimi has been consulting with Iraqis on how best to form that interim government. The United States fully supports his mission.

As the transfer of sovereignty approaches on June 30th, we are likely to see more violence from groups opposed to freedom. We will not be intimidated or diverted. On July 1st and beyond, our reconstruction and military commitment will continue.

In the cause of a free and stable Iraq, our service men and women are working hard and sacrificing greatly. And families of the brave troops who have fallen must know that their loss is not in vain. We will finish our work in Iraq, because the stakes for our country and the world are high. The failure of Iraqi democracy would embolden terrorists around the globe, increase dangers to the American people, and extinguish the hopes of millions in the Middle East. The success of Iraqi democracy would send forth the news from Damascus to Tehran that freedom can be the future of every nation. And democracy will succeed in Iraq, because our coalition is strong, because our resolve is firm, and because the people of Iraq desire and deserve to live in freedom.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:57 a.m. on April 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 30 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner

May 1, 2004

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you for the invite. Thank you, Carl. I'm glad you got a taste of Mother. [*Laughter*] I was going to start off tonight telling some self-deprecating jokes. [*Laughter*] But then I couldn't think of any mistakes I had made to be self-deprecating about. [*Laughter*]

In my recent press conference, John Dickerson of Time Magazine asked the question about what I considered my biggest mistake. It's an excellent question that totally stumped me. [*Laughter*] I guess looking at it practically, my biggest mistake was calling on John. [*Laughter*] Or take that one about Cheney and me answering questions together. That was a toughie. [*Laughter*] So from now on, Dick and I will be holding joint press conferences. [*Laughter*]

We could do it that way, or we could do it this way: You could ask the question, then I could tell Bob Woodward—[*laughter*]—and he could tell you. [*Laughter*]

I thought about giving an economics speech tonight. It really gets me when the critics say I haven't done enough for the economy. I mean, look what I've done for the book publishing industry. [*Laughter*] You've heard some of the titles: "Big Lies;" "The Lies of George W. Bush;" "The Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them." [*Laughter*] I'd like to tell you I've read each of these books, but that would be a lie. [*Laughter*]

Laura and I always look forward to this event because of the good spirit that brings us together. And I appreciate that, Carl, you reflecting that spirit tonight. This year, we are also mindful that our country is in a period of testing and sacrifice. As I speak, men and women in uniform are taking great risks, and so are many journalists who are being faithful to their own sense of duty.

When we think of the great war journalists, we often think of an earlier era: Edward R. Murrow reporting from wartime London; Joe

Rosenthal with his camera at Iwo Jima; or Ernie Pyle, sending columns home from Europe and the Pacific and dying with the men whose stories he told.

In every field in every generation, we tend to view the best as belonging to the past. Yet, in our time, that's not right or fair. Many of us were privileged to know Michael Kelly and to read his clear words and to feel the moral conviction behind them. David Bloom passed through our midst with incredible energy, enthusiasm, and tenacity in getting the story. Others, like Michael Weisskopf, have shown incredible presence of mind and courage that won our admiration. This generation of wartime journalists has done fine work and much more, and they will be remembered long after the first draft of history is completed.

The same is true of our military. We are nearing important days of remembrance. Soon, we will mark the 60th anniversary of D-day, in the company of men who have lived long and can tell you the names of the boys who did not. Later this month, we will dedicate the World War II Memorial here in Washington and look back on a generation that saved the liberty of the world. These events will have an added meaning because America is again asking for courage and sacrifice.

As we honor veterans who are leaving us, we also honor qualities that remain. The generation of World War II can be certain of this: When they are gone, we will still have their kind wearing the uniform of the United States of America.

The loss of Army Corporal Pat Tillman last week in Afghanistan brought home the sorrow that comes with every loss and reminds us of the character of the men and women who serve on our behalf. Friends say that this young man saw the images of September the 11th, and seeing that evil, he felt called to defend America. He set aside a career in athletics and many things the world counts important, wealth and security and the acclaim of the crowds. He chose, instead, the rigors of Ranger training and the fellowship of soldiers and the hard duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Corporal Tillman asked for no special attention. He was modest because he knew there were many like him, making their own sacrifices. They fill the ranks of the Armed Forces. Every day, somewhere, they do brave and good things without notice. Their courage is usually seen only by their comrades, by those who long to be free, and by the enemy. They're willing to give up their lives, and when one is lost, a whole world of hopes and possibilities is lost with them.

This evening, we think of the families who grieve and the families that wait on a loved one's safe return. We count ourselves lucky that this new generation of Americans is as brave and decent as any before it. And we honor with pride and wonder the men and women who carry the flag and the cause of the United States.

May God bless them, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Carl Cannon, president, White House Correspondents' Association; and journalist Bob Woodward.

Remarks on Arrival in South Bend, Indiana

May 3, 2004

I am proud to be standing by the side of my friend Mitch Daniels. Mitch is going to be the Governor of the State of Indiana, and I know for certain the people of this State will love this guy as their Governor. See, I've seen him firsthand. I know what it's like to work with Mitch. He's smart. He's capable. He's well organized. He's got a fabulous sense of humor.

I gave him a lot of tough jobs, and he did each of them with great professionalism and class. I know the people are going to the polls tomorrow in the primary. I'm not a voter in this State, Mitch, but if I were, I'd be voting for you, because I'll know you'll be a great Governor.

Do you want to say something?

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. at South Bend Regional Airport. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of gubernatorial candidate Mitchell Daniels, Jr. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session in Niles, Michigan

May 3, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks a lot. Thank you all very much. Thanks a lot. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Do you think it's all right if I take off my jacket? We're not in Washington anymore. We're in Michigan. Thanks for coming out. Thanks for coming out today. Laura and I are thrilled you're here.

Audience member. Four more!

The President. I'm ready for it. That's what I'm here to assure you: I know what I want to do for the next 4 years. I look forward to having a dialog about that. Sometimes there are kind of fancy speeches, and sometimes we have dialogs. This is a dialog. I want to share some thoughts with you. I'd like to answer some of your questions.

But first, I want to tell you how much Laura and I appreciate you coming out to say hello. It is awfully generous of you and the folks lining the streets to have been so friendly, and we appreciate it.

I told the people back here they had the best view. [*Laughter*] I am really proud of Laura. I love her dearly. She is a fabulous First Lady. She and I are having the time of our life. It's hard to believe this, but the Presidency and living in the White House has made a strong marriage richer, and that's because she is such a loving, calm soul. And I love the influence she's had on our country. She speaks about libraries and reading. One of the things she loves to do is encourage teachers or those who want to be teachers to join the teaching ranks. And for those of you who are teachers, thanks for doing what you're doing, on behalf of me and Laura. Probably the best reason to send me back is so Laura Bush will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Thank you all for coming. Listen, I'm here to ask for your help. I can't win Michigan without you. I can't win Indiana without the folks in South Bend helping as well. Listen, I need you to go to your coffee shops and your community centers and your places of worship, and you tell the people, "George W. Bush has a positive, hopeful vision for everybody in this country."

The way you win elections is you count on the people. You listen to the people, and you count on the people to turn out the vote. We've got what we call georgewbush.com. We didn't have that in 1978 when we were running for Congress. We've got it now. It's an opportunity for people to get on the Internet to figure out how to help, how to become a volunteer in the campaign, how to help register the voters, how to help turn people out to the polls in November. And with your help, there is no doubt in my mind I can carry Michigan, and I will be reelected for 4 more years.

I want to thank Congressman Fred Upton for his service to the great State of Michigan. As we say out in west Texas, he's a good hand. [*Laughter*] That means he's a good Congressman. I really enjoy working with him. He cares a lot about the people—about how the people of Michigan are doing, and he's really a good, honest, honorable soul.

And I appreciate Congressman Chris Chocola coming up from Indiana today. Thank you, Chris. He's done a fine job in the Congress as well. He's what they call a freshman. That would be the first-term Congressman. But he's made his mark. He's an honorable guy. He's an effective United States Congressman, like Fred is, and I'm proud of the service you've shown. I'm glad Sarah is here. Happy birthday, Sarah. Today is Sarah Chocola's birthday. I wouldn't have known that if her thoughtful husband, Chris, hadn't have told me on Air Force One. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the mayor. Mr. Mayor, the mayor of Niles, is with us today. Mike, thank you for coming. I like to remind mayors, fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming, Mayor. Glad you're here.

Statehouse Speaker Rick Johnson is here. Mr. Speaker, thank you for coming. Members of the legislature and the State senate are here; local officials are here. But more importantly, you're here. I'm proud to have you here.

I'm proud to share with you why I'm upbeat about the future of this country. One reason I'm upbeat is because I understand the strength and character of the American

people. We're a strong nation. We're a decent nation, and we're a compassionate country. What I want to do is share with you why I want to be President for 4 more years, and it's to make sure America is a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country.

You know, I wasn't sure—when I was campaigning in Michigan in 2000, I never would have dreamt I'd be standing in front of you 4 years later saying we were at war. It never crossed my mind. But we are at war. And my most important job is to make sure America is a safe country by defeating the enemy. That's the task ahead.

We're doing everything we can in Washington to organize our Government so we can better respond to threats. I want to thank the first-responders who are here today, the local police and firefighters and emergency teams who are dedicating their lives to the service of their—of the men and women in this part of the world. I want to thank you for what you're doing. I want to thank you for your—[*applause*].

And we're talking better between the Federal Government and the State government and the local government. We're sharing information better. We're better prepared. But we've got to be right 100 percent of the time to protect the homeland, and the enemy has got to be right only once. The best way to defend the homeland is to stay on the offensive and bring the killers to justice, which is precisely what I will continue to do as the President of the United States. I've got a plan to win the war on terror.

And we're making progress in this different kind of war. See, we're dealing with individuals who will hide in caves and order attacks. They have no conscience. It's hard for Americans to understand that, but they don't care about innocent life. We do. They hate us because of what we love, and we love our freedom. And we're not going to change—we're not going to change. They won't intimidate us. They're not going to frighten us. This is America.

Audience member. We're behind you, Mr. President!

The President. Thank you, sir.

We're cutting off their money. We're—about two-thirds of their known leaders have been brought to justice. Slowly but surely, we're winning, but we must not relent. I've got a plan to defeat the enemy by better sharing intelligence, by making sure our troops have got all they need.

Listen, some have said this is just a matter of law enforcement. This isn't a matter of law enforcement. We tried that attitude before. And while we had that attitude that this was just a law enforcement matter, the enemy was planning and plotting. No, this isn't a law enforcement matter. This is a war, and the President of the United States must use all the assets of the United States to defend America.

The President must be clear-sighted and, when he says something, mean it. It's essential that the President of the United States speak clearly and mean what he says. So when I say that if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist, I meant what I said. And the Taliban, which had harbored Al Qaida and helped train Al Qaida, found out what the United States and our friends meant. They're no longer in power. And the world is better off for it, and America is safer because of the actions we took in Afghanistan.

Part of making sure you're effective as the President and the world is more peaceful is for the President to speak clearly and not send contradictory signals to the world. I want you to know how life is significantly better for, particularly, young women in Afghanistan, thanks to America. Listen, we're a compassionate country because we love freedom. Our hearts break when we hear that young girls were literally enslaved to the ideological backwardness of the Taliban. And now, thanks to the United States' action and our coalition action in Afghanistan, a free country is emerging. We are safer, and young girls in Afghanistan for the first time now go to school.

Those are the kinds of things Americans care about. That's what we love about our country. We're not only tough when we have to be to defend ourselves; we're compassionate toward people from all walks of life. Laura has been especially important to the women of Afghanistan because of the messages she has sent, and so have the American people. Afghanistan is far from perfect, but it's a heck of a lot better today than it was

2 years ago. And as a result, the world is a better place.

My job is also to remember lessons learned. You've got to be clear-sighted when you're the President. The lesson I learned on September the 11th is, not only are we facing an enemy that will kill at the drop of a hat, trying to shake our will, but that when we see a threat overseas, we've got to take it seriously. You know, not every threat will be dealt with with military means, but certain threats get to the point where after diplomacy has failed, the United States of America has no other option. That was the case in Iraq.

The lesson of September the 11th is oceans no longer protect us, and therefore, we cannot let threats fully materialize. In other words, we can't see a threat and hope it goes away. We can't see a threat and say, "Oh, gosh, maybe the person will change their mind and all of a sudden their hatred for America will diminish." We've got to deal with threats.

I looked at intelligence on Iraq and saw a threat. The United States Congress looked at that same intelligence; people from both political parties looked at the same intelligence I did. They saw the threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat and, therefore, voted unanimously to say to Saddam Hussein, "Get rid of your weapons and your programs, or you will face serious consequences."

Now, remember, I'm the kind of fellow that when I say something, I mean it. And I said when the United Nations Security Council—we meant it—"Disarm, or face serious consequences." Saddam Hussein, as he had for nearly a decade, defied the demands of the free world, and so I was faced with a choice. Do I trust the word of a madman who had used weapons of mass destruction, who had professed his hatred for America, who had ties to terrorist organizations, who had funded suiciders into Israel, or do I defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. The world is better off because he sits in a prison cell. Because we acted, torture rooms are closed; rape rooms no longer exist; mass graves are no longer a possibility in Iraq. Listen, the world is better off. We've still got hard work to do. And we've been through tough times. We've been through tough times recently. We've got a lot of brave folks over there helping the Iraqis become a free society. It's in our interests we succeed.

See, not only did we make America more secure by getting rid of Saddam, we are literally changing the world by insisting that freedom and democracy prevail in a part of the world where there's hatred and violence and recruitment of suiciders.

What America loves is our freedom. But we also understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We'll prevail—we will prevail. And when Iraq is free and democratic, that part of the world will start to change. And then those soldiers and the families who mourn for the loss will be able to look back, and they will be able to say about their loved one, "Job well done." The world is better off for it, and generations of Americans are more likely to live in peace and freedom. A secure America is my most important job, and America will be more secure when freedom prevails in parts of the world that have never seen the freedom that we know in America.

We'll pass sovereignty on June the 30th. That's what we told the Iraqi people. There's a lot of people there wondering whether or not America will keep its word. They're wondering whether or not politics will cause politicians to change their mind in the midst of this transfer of sovereignty. I'm not changing my mind. I'm not going to change my mind at all. We're doing the right thing. We'll always honor those who have sacrificed for our freedom. We will not allow them to die in vain. Iraq will be free, and America will be more secure.

A stronger America means an America that has got a strong economy, and I fully understand there are some people in this part of the world who still hurt, people that are looking for work. My attitude is, you know, the statistics are good, but they're not good if you're somebody looking for work. My attitude is, so long as we've got people looking

for work, the President has got to make sure there's an environment in which there's—jobs are being created.

And listen, we've been through a lot. They say, "How can you be optimistic—such an optimistic fellow?" I say, "Well, I'm optimistic because I know what we have been through." Think about what the economy has been through. Recession—when we first came into office, the economy was going backwards. The stock market was declining.

And then we got hit, and the attacks on September the 11th hurt our economy, if you really think about it. It shook our minds a little bit. It kind of was a tough moment, incredibly tough moment in our history, and yet we rebounded from that.

Then we had some corporate citizens forget to tell the truth. They forgot what it meant to be responsible. We passed tough laws, by the way. It's clear now that you'll get busted if you don't tell the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

Then my decision to go into Iraq obviously affected capital formation. Listen, when you're reading the TV screens that say "March to War," it's not very good for planning. If you're a small-business owner and you see "March to War," it's not conducive to risking new capital.

So we've overcome a lot because our economy is growing. The GDP growth is strong. Job creation is good, but there are certain parts of the world where they're not good. Homeownership is great. Listen, minority homeownership in America is at the highest rate ever since I've been the President of the United States. Seven-hundred-fifty-thousand new jobs created since last August, that's positive; 5,700—or 5,900 new jobs in Michigan in the month of March. But Michigan lags behind, and I fully understand that.

But I want to remind you how we got—overcome those obstacles. See, I believe that the best way to generate economic growth is to let people keep more of their own money. There are some people in Washington who think the best way to generate jobs and growth is to grow the size of the Federal Government. No, I think it's to let people keep more of their own money. The tax cuts we passed came at the absolute right time.

I'm going to talk to a small-business owner here and a family that benefited from the tax cuts. It's probably a better way for me to describe to you what I'm talking about to let other people describe their lives and what the tax relief meant. But it made a difference.

The fundamental question is not, "What have you done," though—"What are you going to?" And the first thing I'm going to do is to continue pressing to make sure America is the best place to do business in the world. If you're interested—the question about job creation and job growth depends upon this being a good place to do business. If it's a lousy place to do business, we won't have the job growth. If it's a good place for the entrepreneur to realize his or her dreams, it will be a great place.

And so therefore, we need tort reform in America. Listen, I'm all for people getting justice in the courts. I'm against the frivolous lawsuits that make it very difficult for business to expand.

And so if we want to be competitive and be the leader in the world in the economy, if we want to be a strong nation, we've got to have an energy policy. We don't have an energy policy. It's bottled up in the United States Congress. These two good Members of the Congress voted for one. They can't get it out of the Senate. It's stuck. But you can't have a vibrant economy unless you become less dependent on foreign sources of energy, and there's ways to do that.

Fred and I were talking about how wonderful it will be if some President sometime said, "The corn crop is up, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." That requires a different attitude about alternative sources of fuel. We've got to have clean coal technology. We've got to have different kind of automobiles in the out-years—hydrogen-powered automobiles. We've got to encourage conservation, but we've also got to use the resources we have to get there. We've got to use the resources we have in an environmentally friendly way to transition to the time when technology will make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. We need to be exploring for energy. We need to be less dependent on foreign sources of fuel if we expect this economy to be competitive and for the jobs to be created.

The cost of health care makes it hard for small business to expand and people to find work. And therefore, we've got to have reasonable policy. By the way, there's a debate in Washington as to who best to run the health care industries of America, whether it be the Federal Government or whether it be the consumers. I believe we ought to empower consumers, not the Federal Government, to make the decisions in the health care industry.

That's why I'm for association health care plans that will allow small businesses to pool risk in order to bring down the cost of health care for their employees. That's why I'm for health savings accounts, which empower consumers. These are new products. This is something that makes eminent sense for the future of our country because it puts the decisionmaking power into the hands of the consumer. It makes sure the doctor-patient relationship is central to health care.

I'm for medical liability reform at the Federal level so that we've got docs available and affordable. Listen, junk lawsuits run up the cost of medicine, and it makes it hard for people to find work in this country. We need medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

Finally, I want—I hope you understand that—how important education is to making sure that we've got jobs here in America. First of all, we're not going to be able to compete for the jobs of the 21st century if our kids can't read. It's as simple as that. If we want jobs here at home, we'd better make sure we get it right when it comes to public education. The No Child Left Behind Act is a great piece of legislation. You know why? It challenges the soft bigotry of low expectations. It raises the bar. It expects the best. It believes that every child can learn. It's got money in there to make sure that when you find problems early, that they're solved before it's too late. It says, "Why don't you show us whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract." It is a hopeful piece of legislation that's going to change America.

We're about to talk about the community college system and how important it is to make sure the workers have the skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Our economy is transitioning. In other words, there's some industries that are not competitive, but there are other new industries that are growing, and they're looking for workers. And so therefore, we've got to make sure we've got a system that is able to take a person and train that person so they can fill the new jobs.

We're about to talk to a person who went to the community college system after having worked in the manufacturing sector. I'll let him tell the story. But what I'm telling you is, is that with good job training, we can have jobs in the short run—good job training, we can have jobs in the long run.

So this is part of the way to make sure America is not only strong today but strong in the future. I have a plan. I have a plan that says basically this: The role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes, in which innovation is strong and important, and in which our workers get the skills necessary to fill the jobs that will be coming in the 21st century.

When I came in, Laura said, "You better keep this thing short, or otherwise the bus driver is going to leave." [*Laughter*] I obviously didn't listen to her.

Finally, I want to talk about a better America. In order to understand how to have a better America, you've got to understand the relationship between Government and people. Government is not a loving organization. Government is justice and law. Love comes from the hearts and souls of the citizens. If you're interested in changing America, if you want America to be a better place, it's really important for the President and others to rally the true strength of the country, which lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens.

I've spent a lot of time talking about the examples in different communities of people who are taking time out of their lives to love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. It's such a powerful part of our uniqueness that America is defined—if you think about it, America's compassion is defined not by Government but by loving acts that take place on a daily basis in communities all across our country. I call that the American spirit, and the job of the President is to understand that that spirit exists, to lift it up, to herald it, and to nurture it.

Today we're going to—okay, I'm through blowing off. I'm now going to ask some citizens to maybe share some thoughts with us, and then I'll answer some of your questions. First, I had the privilege of meeting Mike Welch, a small-business owner. Mike brought his family. Mike, it was nice of you to bring your family. [*Laughter*]

He is the president of Express-1. Now, it is what they call an S corp. In other words, Mike's small business pays taxes at the individual income-tax rate. So when you hear me talking about cutting individual income taxes, not only think about your own wallet, but think about what individual income-tax cuts do to small businesses.

An integral part of our economic policy has been—and if I'm fortunate enough to win President, will continue to be—to make sure that the small-business sector of America is vibrant and alive. And I'll tell you why. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by the small-business sector. And therefore, when you hear people talking about job creation, you better hope that they understand the vitality and importance of the small business.

So, again, I repeat, we cut taxes on everybody who pays taxes. We don't want Government saying, "Okay, you have to pay more, and you don't get to pay any kind of thing. In other words, if we're going to have tax relief, the fair thing is for everybody to have tax relief, but it was especially effective for helping businesses like Mike.

Mike, first of all, welcome.

Mike Welch. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm honored to be here.

The President. Where do you live?

Mr. Welch. I live in Stevensville, Michigan.

The President. There you go.

Mr. Welch. And our business is—we started here in Niles, Michigan, with a business incubator. It was a great help locally, and we've moved just down the street to Buchanan, Michigan. And the city of Buchanan has helped us greatly also start our business. And starting in 1989, we had two vehicles, and now our fleet has grown to over 170 vehicles.

The President. Good. What do you do? Why do you have all those vehicles?

Mr. Welch. We're an expedited transportation firm, and what that means is when manufacturers or factories or printers need something shipped right away today, we do it. So it's basically just-in-time inventory.

The President. How many employees?

Mr. Welch. In the office, we have over 50 right now.

The President. Good. And that's up from two in 1989?

Mr. Welch. It's up quite a bit, yes, and over the last 9 months, we've seen huge growth. In this quarter alone, we're up over 70 percent from last year. So things are going good.

The President. That's good, yes. It says on my notes here that you're going to invest this year.

Mr. Welch. Yes.

The President. How much are you going to invest?

Mr. Welch. We're going to invest up to $400,000. We already have currently invested over $205,000 in our Qualcomm satellite units. All our vehicles are satellite tracked, and we plan on adding at least 50 more vehicles this year, which will hit right up to that $400,000 mark.

The President. Listen, the tax relief we passed encouraged investment. And I want you to understand the importance of the decision he has made to other people's work, the ability for other people to find work.

See, when Mike says he's going to invest, that means he's going to purchase something, in this case. And when he makes the decision to purchase something, somebody has to produce it. And when somebody produces it, it means somebody is more likely to keep a job and/or, if the orders are enough, they will expand the job base. And so when you hear that tax relief encouraged investment, I hope you really understand what that means is the tax relief encouraged somebody to spend some money, which meant somebody was more likely to find a job.

See, the decision that Mike makes—needless to say, it's optimistic to hear him say that his sales are up so strong. He's kind of a leading indicator, sounds like to me, of whether or not the economy is improving.

Are you going to hire anybody else this year? If not, I've got a suggestion for you. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Welch. Absolutely.

The President. You are?

Mr. Welch. Absolutely. We're looking for a couple people right now, so——

The President. That might not sound like a lot to some, two people or three people. But there are a lot of Mikes in this world. There are a lot of entrepreneurs in America. One of the true strengths of our system is there's a lot of small-business owners who are working hard to meet demand and are employing people. So when you hear Mike say, "Well, I'm thinking about adding three people this quarter," just think about the fact that there's a lot of people like Mike, a lot of small-business owners who are feeling much better about their future and, therefore, are confident in standing up in front of the President with all the TV cameras, saying, "I'm thinking about hiring three more people."

I appreciate you, Mike. Thank you very much.

I also had the privilege of talking to Phil and Lynn Hegg. They're a hard-working couple. They've got three beautiful girls. Is that right?

Phil Hegg. That's right, Mr. President.

The President. Proud father, I might add. So here's the thing. The tax relief meant that he and Lynn had $2,200 extra in their pocket last year and this year. Again, in Washington terms, that's not much. In this family's terms, it's a lot. The tax relief was important to the Heggs. I'm going to tell you what they did with the money—I'm not going to try to spend it for them. That's the other avenue; that's when you raise the taxes, and you spend it for them. [*Laughter*] This is where you let them keep the money. It's their money, after all—$2,200.

Some of the reason why they got to save $2,200—in other words, the child credit went up. It's going back down unless Congress acts. The marriage penalty was reduced. It doesn't make any sense, by the way, to penalize marriage. It ought to be the kind of thing we're encouraging. If Congress doesn't act, they're going to raise the taxes on these good folks. If they don't act immediately, their taxes go up by $1,000. It's the wrong time to be raising taxes, the wrong time, when the economy is getting better, for Congress to be taking $1,000 out of their pocket.

Tell us what you did with the money.

Mr. Hegg. Well, Mr. President, first I'd like to thank you for making a difference in that, because between the reduction in marriage penalty, the child tax credit, and, obviously, putting more money back into our pocket, I was able to keep a promise to my 4½ year-old daughter. When she was 2½ going through potty training——

The President. Wait a minute. We've got cameras here, and she might be watching. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Hegg. She is hiding out over there. But I did promise her that if she learned to use the potty correctly on a regular basis, I was going to take her to see Mickey Mouse's house someday. And you know, we've had a couple kids since then. So timing wasn't always great——

The President. So you haven't made the promise since? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Hegg. We didn't make the promise since, but the reality is that this year, we were able to carry through on that promise. And it was—so we were able to have those moments like at the end of the evening, we were sitting in the hotel; we were playing a game called, you know, "What's your favorite part? What did you enjoy today?" And my daughter Regan, she told me that her favorite part of the day was riding on Thunder Mountain with her father. That was pretty cool.

The President. That's great. It also says here that Lynn convinced you to maybe make some household repairs or buy some appliances. Is that right?

Lynn Hegg. We were able to go ahead and make—get a new washer and dryer.

The President. New washer and dryer. Somebody had to make the washer and dryer.

Mrs. Hegg. And we went ahead and we bought—within our community, which is—Whirlpool is right up the street from us in St. Joe there, in Benton Harbor, the world headquarters. So we would not be stoned by our friends, you have to buy within your area.

The President. That's good. You purchased locally?

Mrs. Hegg. Exactly.

The President. The reason I asked the Heggs to come today is it's really important for people in Congress to hear stories about people who have benefited from tax relief. Oftentimes, you hear—you read about statistics, or this might have made a difference or that—what matters is how it has affected people's lives. What matters about tax relief is it's made people more optimistic about their future. It's enabled them to do, in this case, a better job of being a mom or a dad, enabled this dad to fulfill a promise. He understands, like most of the people here, I suspect, understand his biggest responsibility is to be a good dad, is to love his child with all his heart.

Thank you all for coming. Part of making sure that we're prosperous in the future is to have a President who is not going to raise taxes on the American people, and that President is George W. Bush. [*Applause*] Thank you all. Thank you all.

Okay, David Mathews is with us. David is the president of the Southwestern Michigan College. That's a community college. The community colleges have got a fantastic opportunity to make sure that the workforce is educated for the jobs of tomorrow. As I mentioned, we're in a period of transition. In other words, some jobs aren't as competitive as they used to be—or industries aren't as competitive as they used to be—and therefore, the jobs are not as plentiful as they used to be. But there are some fantastic opportunities in our society today available for people who want to find work. And a great place to learn the skills necessary to fill those jobs is at the community college system.

David, tell us about some of the interesting things that are going on on your campus. People need to hear this. This is a vital part—community colleges are a vital part of Michigan. They're a vital part of the national fabric, and they provide a fantastic opportunity to help people. That's what we want. We want to help people have the skills so they can fill these jobs that are being created.

Go ahead.

[*David Mathews made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, let me stop you there. Did you hear what he said? He said, "We partnered with businesses." In other words, what the community college has been able to do is say, "If you've got a need for a worker, come to us. We'll provide the training ground. Help us design a curriculum that will meet your needs." In other words, it's kind—it's a market-based approach, really, isn't it, to education, which says, "If there's a demand for jobs, we'll help you fill it." And the key is the collaborative effort between the community college and those who are looking for workers.

Go ahead.

[*Dr. Mathews made further remarks.*]

The President. Good. It's a—I think the better way to describe what takes place on your campus is to call on Dan—if that's all right—unless you've got something else to say.

Dr. Mathews. No, absolutely. That's—we're very happy to hear Dan's story.

The President. Let me tell you something about Dan. He probably won't say it. I will. He got laid off from a manufacturing job. Is that an accurate statement?

Dan Hodge. Yes.

The President. Right after 9/11.

Mr. Hodge. Absolutely.

The President. Pick it up from there.

[*Mr. Hodge made brief remarks.*]

The President. Part of the vision for America has got to be to understand the power of education and to make sure the education system meets the needs of the 21st century.

A couple of points in his story. One, as you noticed, he said Government helped him go back to school. In other words, some people are probably saying, like Dan did, "I'm not so sure I can go back." He doesn't look that old, but he looks a little older, doesn't he? [*Laughter*] Let's just say he just didn't graduate from high school last year. And they're wondering whether or not there's financial help there. There's—part of making sure that America is hopeful in the future is, better have a President who understands the need for Pell grants, which I do, to make sure that people can find the assistance necessary to go back to community college.

Second, he said he made up his mind. One thing Government cannot do is make people be ambitious. That's up to Dan. That's up to Dan to make the decision. Dan made up his mind. See, our job is to help make sure the opportunities are available, is to grow the economy. But it's up to Dan to go back and get the skills necessary.

And the final point that is really important for people to understand, by going back to school and learning new skills, his pay is a lot better. You hear a lot about productivity in our society. A productive society means that a worker is able to do more in a less period of time than before. And therefore, the more productive your society—your economy becomes, the faster it has to grow in order to increase the job base. See, if you got one person being able to put out more widgets than before, you need demand for more widgets to grow in order for somebody else to find work. And that has created a short-term problem for us in the economy. We're overcoming it now because the economy is beginning to pick up, but a productive society is an important society for the future, because you know why? People's standard of living goes up. The more productive a society is, the more likely it is people are going to be able to have better wages and better earnings. The more productive a society we have in America, the more likely it is we're the leader in the world.

And it's very important for us to be the technological leader in the world and to be the leader in innovation, and that's why we've got to have broadband technology in Niles, Michigan, for every home in Niles, Michigan.

And so you're looking at the smallest unit of productivity increase. Collectively, however, it makes America the leader in the world. Education is vital to this good man's life. It's really an important part of making sure he's got a hopeful future. Education is really important to make sure people can find the jobs which will exist, but education is also important to make sure this Nation remains the strongest economic nation in the world, which is vital. And it's vital not only so people can make a good living; it's hard to be a hopeful nation unless we've got a good economy. And by hopeful nation, I mean people—all people being able to realize the American Dream.

Some people need help, though. Some people need help beyond just education. Some people need help of the heart. Government can't fix hearts, but Government can call on people that will help heal hearts. We've got such a person here today in Michelle Dunlap. She's the project director of Southwest Michigan Faith and Community-Based Training Institutes.

I want you to describe your program if you don't mind, Michelle. Tell people about it.

Before she begins, though, I want to tell you I believe that Government should stand on the side—not against but on the side—in other words, stand side by side with faith-based programs.

Tell us what you do.

[*Michelle Dunlap made brief remarks.*]

The President. I was talking about business entrepreneurs and educational entrepreneurs. Now, Michelle is helping to foster social entrepreneurship, and that is to encourage people of faith, in her case, to step up and to become a vibrant part of healing lives.

Listen, we've got people who are hooked on drugs. As a matter of fact, a lot of the drug abuse can be traced to serious addiction. In other words, a few using a lot is a way to maybe describe drug abuse in the country. And the question is, how do you crack the addiction? In some cases, it requires a higher being to help crack the addiction, and therefore, substance abuse programs based upon faith can be very effective.

I want to thank the folks for helping me enrich the story about the vision for an America that is safer, stronger, and better. And before we head up the road to Kalamazoo, I do want to answer some questions. If anybody has got some, now is your chance. I'm used to answering questions—[*laughter*]—maybe not in Niles, Michigan, but I am used to answering them. But I'll be glad to answer some. Step up. There's a mike right there.

Latino Vote in Michigan

Q. Hello. I would like to know, how can I help you win more Latino votes in the State of Michigan?

The President. Thank you. Now, those are the tough kind of questions. Thank you, sir. *En primer lugar, vamos a ganar.* I said, "In the first place, we're going to win." I think you need to explain to the people from all walks of life that the American vision I have is for everybody to be able to realize their dreams, not just a few people but everybody. It starts with a good education system. It starts with a system that just doesn't shuffle kids through.

See, we've changed the dynamic in Washington. We fully understand that local control of schools is essential for excellence. I fully understand that most funding is going to come from the States, as it should be. But when the Federal Government spends money, particularly for Title I students, we have now started to ask the question: Can the kids read and write and add and subtract?

This never happened before. The question has never been asked from the Federal Government. That's important for Hispanic moms and dads to hear that question asked, because guess what happens sometimes? They're the easiest kids to quit on. They're the hardest to educate, supposedly. And they just get shuffled through, and they end up coming out of high school without the capacity to read.

We're using accountability to analyze curriculum to see if it's working. We're using accountability to detect problems early, so that a young child will get intensive reading instruction at an early age, so he or she can become a good reader, so he or she can learn the basics of math before it's too late.

You ought to tell your Hispanic friends that the Bush vision is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations, believes in the hopes of, aspirations of every mom and dad in the country, regardless of their heritage, says, "If you want to own something in this country of ours, we're promoting an ownership society." We want Latinos owning their own small business if they have a dream and an inclination to do so. We want more African Americans and Latinos owning their own home, because this team understands if you own something in America, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

You've got a question?

President's Visit

Q. Why did you come to Niles?

The President. Why did I come to Niles? [*Laughter*] Because I wanted to get out of Washington. Because there's good people here. Because I find it really fun to go to a place where people didn't expect the President to come. Right, Mayor? [*Laughter*] Thank you very much for your hospitality, Mayor. Tell your police, thanks for making sure that the bus got in all right, too.

Let's see, what else? Yes, sir.

Haiti

Q. I'm from Brandywine High School here in Niles. I'm an educator.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And from the staff and the students, welcome to Niles.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. I have a question regarding Haiti.

The President. Sure.

Q. We do a unique thing at our school. We have two teachers who take students overseas. One goes to the Netherlands, and the other one goes to Haiti on active learning field trips. My question to you is, how long do you predict that our troops will remain in Haiti? And two, what is the United States doing to help with the economic condition in Haiti?

The President. Yes, thanks. Great question. Our troops will stay there as—until the United Nations peacekeepers will move in, which we hope is relatively quickly. In other words, we moved in with the Canadians and the French to provide stability. The United Nations will be moving peacekeepers in to make sure that the current Government has a chance to bring a rule of law and democracy to bear in Haiti.

In terms of helping Haiti, we've got a robust aid package. The problem is you want to make sure the aid package gets spent properly. And therefore, it's important to have a stable Government. We're also helping a lot with HIV/AIDS in Haiti.

Let me talk about America and compassion. You know, oftentimes, people talk about our ability to fight and win war, which is an important part of keeping the peace. But we're also a compassionate nation. Where we see hunger, we act, as a Government and

as a people. We'll never use food as a diplomatic weapon, by the way. We care about people who are hungry in the world. We're the largest food donor in the world; we're providing more help for the hungry people.

We're now leading the fight against HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa and in nations in the Caribbean that suffer from HIV/AIDS. Our aid is robust and strong because when we see people suffer from disease, we want to help.

We're the greatest nation on the face of the Earth and, therefore, have a duty not only to spread freedom and, therefore, peace but have a duty, have an obligation to help the suffering. And that's exactly what the United States of America is doing in Haiti as well as other countries around the world. And it makes me darn proud to be the President of a country that is so compassionate.

Yell it out.

Safety in Public Schools

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, well, I think it's a great question. I think that, first of all, the—safety in public schools is a local issue. It's up to State and local authorities to make sure the schools run well. You don't want the Federal Government running the public schools in the country. You want the Federal Government helping.

When I was the Governor of Texas, I used to say, "You can't teach self-esteem, but you can teach a person how to read and write, and they will learn self-esteem." And so to answer your question—I mean, I repeat exactly what I said before to my Latino friend here, and that is in order to keep people—the best way to keep people out of the prisons is to teach them to read and write and add and subtract early, so they realize they've got a hopeful future.

Now, again, we can't make people love one another. Many of the kids that you deal with have been, you know, hadn't had the proper amount of love. But what we can do is encouraging mentoring programs, which we're doing. We can encourage faith-based programs that have heard the call to help a child understand that he or she may be loved, even though they don't find that love oftentimes in their own home.

There are ways to help a child. But from an education perspective, and where the Government really does interplay, is to make sure the education system works well, so there's not that frustration necessary for a child who says, "I have no hope. I have no future."

Thank you for what you're doing. It's a tough line of work. But the idea is to keep—[*applause*].

Yes, sir.

Energy Prices

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. Here's a man who started his own business 50 years ago. He's still in business, which says he's a heck of a good businessman. [*Laughter*] It's not easy to be in business, by the way. For those of you who have started your own business, you know how hard it is. And yet he is saying, after 50 years, the problem he now faces is high energy costs. The problem that people in Michigan are now facing are energy costs at the pump. You're up to about $1.90 here, I understand. And it's—this is an issue of deep concern. Not only it's a short-term issue for America; it's a long-term issue for this country to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's why we've got to get us an energy bill out.

Now, the long-term solution are actually going to change the nature of the automobile and have automobile powered by hydrogen. That's my dream. That's my vision. But we're 15 years away from that. Now, there's more research that has to be done to make sure the engines run well, to make sure consumer demand is met—I mean, people aren't going to want to get in a hydrogen automobile and not have it go very fast—and to make sure the infrastructure is available so that there's convenience for the consumer.

In the short run, we've got to increase our energy. We've got to use clean coal technologies to increase coal. We've got to relieve the pressure on the energy supplies. Now, the problem we face right now is a worldwide increase in demand. The economy in America is stronger, which increases demand for energy. But so is the world economy, and that's positive in many ways, but it also has

had the negative effect of increasing demand relative to supply for world supplies of energy.

I tell you, I think this country ought to be wiser about how we use nuclear power. I know the technologies have changed so we can build safe nuclear power and store it safely. A strong effort to provide more safe nuclear power will help us on the environment, will make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

And so it's a—yes, you bring up a point that I made earlier. How can you be hopeful if you're worried about supply of energy and the price of energy? And that's why we need an energy plan out of the United States Congress.

Yes, sir.

Diversity in Government

Q. I'm really concerned about you sharing with America how you have chosen to make sure that African Americans, Hispanics, women, these coalitions, how you are putting them to the task and getting involved with your election. Can you talk about that?

The President. Sure, I will. First thing, there's a lot of rhetoric in politics and—sometimes empty, sometimes not. I hope people judge me on the decisions I've made.

In terms of African Americans, I've empowered many African Americans to positions of prime responsibility. I want you to think about—envision this: Sitting down with foreign leaders, and if it's a small delegation, I'll have my Secretary of State and my National Security Adviser. And guess—they are great Americans who happen to be African American.

The Secretary of Education is African American. My lawyer is a Latino. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is an African American. In other words, what I'm saying is that I brought people from all walks of life into my Government for a reason. These are competent, really good people, and they bring diversity into our Government, which is important.

Not only have I listened to strong women like Laura; I have done so with people like Karen Hughes, Condi Rice, Harriet Miers, Domestic Policy Adviser Margaret Spellings. I mean, I can go down the list. I am proud of the diversity that I brought into Government. I think it's important. It makes me a better President when I have people from different walks of life to listen to.

President's Goals

Q. If you're reelected President, what will be your main focus?

The President. Yes, thank you. I guess I didn't make myself very clear. [*Laughter*] Thank you. My main focus will be to win the war on terror so America is secure. My main focus will be to continue to spread freedom, and that's an important focus.

I want to remind you about obligations and duties. I believe where we see suffering, we must help. And a lot of times, people suffer because they're not free. Freedom is so important for you to be able to—for—the spread of freedom is important for you to be able to grow up in a peaceful world. And free societies are peaceful societies, see? Free societies are more likely societies which are able to address the anger and hopelessness that we oftentimes find in societies that have spawned terror. Free societies don't threaten neighbors. Free societies don't develop weapons of mass destruction to blackmail the world.

Freedom is such an integral part of—should be an integral part of the U.S. foreign policy. Some say, "Well, let's work for stability in parts of the world." No, that's not what we're interested in. Of course, we want stability. Free societies will bring stability. The ultimate long-term objective for American foreign policy must be the spread of freedom.

Here at home, I want to make sure people can realize their dreams. You can't realize your dream if the economy is not doing very well. That's a period of—that's just a period when people don't aspire—can't aspire—they may aspire, but they can't realize their aspirations, is a better way to put it.

And the other thing I want to do is to make sure that everybody can feel the great power of love. Again, I fully understand Government's role is limited in love. Government is not a loving organization, particularly around April 15th. [*Laughter*] But people, whether it be me or the Governor or the

mayor, can inspire people, call upon people to serve our Nation by loving a neighbor.

That's part of how we've got to make sure America is a hopeful country. You've just got to understand, amidst our plenty, there are people who hurt. There are people who are lonely. There are people who are hungry, and yet, those problems can be solved if the American people decide to solve them.

And one of my jobs is to set the high aspirations for the American people and call upon our citizens to fulfill a duty I think each of us have to help somebody who hurts. And it can happen. Listen, we'll change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

Funding for Volunteer Programs

Q. Mr. President, my name's Christine Van Landingham, and I have the privilege of working with 120 senior citizens in these 3 counties who volunteer as foster grandparents in our local schools, and each and every one of them touching the hearts of many, many kids. What my question to you is, this year that program funding saw a cut in Federal funding. How do you propose to support those programs and, more importantly, those volunteers?

The President. Well, was it cut at the Federal level? It was? Well, it's what you get for trying to make sure the deficit gets cut in half. I think it's very important for you to continue your work and calling on people to volunteer. These are volunteers. The good thing about volunteers, they don't cost much. I don't know the specifics about your request, but I'll look into it.

Final question. Yes, sir.

Freedom of Religion/President's Faith

Q. I'm curious to know—I hear you mention God in most of your speeches, and I'm curious to know how your faith in God affects your daily routine.

The President. Thank you, sir. First, you've got to understand, my job is never to promote a religion. My job is to promote freedom for people to worship the way they see fit. The job of the President is to make sure that America is a free society where you can worship or don't worship. You're just as strong a patriot if you worship—than if you don't worship. That's—the job of the President is to make sure this precious aspect of our society is strong.

Personally, I do rely upon the Almighty. I'm reading Oswald Chambers. If you've read Oswald Chambers, you understand that Oswald Chambers is a pretty good gauge to test your walk. I rely upon—let me say this, I appreciate the prayers of the people. The fact that people pray for me and Laura is a powerful part of our life. It is humbling to know that people in Niles, Michigan, who I probably will never get to thank personally, say a prayer for us. And it sustains me. Somebody said to me one time, "Well, how do you know they're praying for you?" And I said, "I just do. I know it." And it's an important part of the Presidency, from my perspective.

Come on, Baby. Laura just gave me the hook. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you all for coming. I want to appreciate your presence here. I'm counting on you. Just like you have been counting on me, I'm counting on you to help your neighbors understand the importance of this election. Peace and freedom depend upon this election. Prosperity for the people depend upon this election.

You can make a big difference. And I hope you—I hope—and I think you will—join me and Laura as we work together to make sure this country is a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country.

May God bless you. Thank you all. Appreciate you being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:45 p.m. in the Niles Senior High School gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Michael T. McClausin of Niles; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Karen Hughes, former Counselor to the President. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in Kalamazoo, Michigan

May 3, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Be seated, unless you don't have a seat. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you being here.

It's great to be back in Kalamazoo. It just didn't seem all that long ago that I was here. We had a great trip in 2000. I'm back here asking for the vote again, and I'm asking for your help.

I want to thank you for coming. I want to thank you for showing an interest in the future of our country. For those of you who are ready to go to work like I am, I would urge you to dial up georgewbush.com. That will give you an opportunity to volunteer. It will help you find out ways to register the vote. I'm asking you to go to your community centers and your houses of worship, to speak to your neighbors from all political parties, and tell them I've got a hopeful, optimistic, positive vision for every citizen who lives in the State of Michigan.

We've accomplished a lot in 3 years, but there's more to do. There's more to do. I have a plan to win the war on terror and to spread freedom and peace throughout the world. We have shown the country that this administration can help lead the country through tough times. But there's more to do. I have a plan to make sure this Nation is prosperous in every corner of America, so every citizen from all walks of life can realize the great promise of our country.

I understand the limitations of Government, so I have a plan to call upon the compassion of the American people, to rally the deep love Americans have for their neighbors to make sure that those who hurt find comfort, those who are hungry find food, those who look for shelter can find housing. I have a vision I look forward to laying out to our fellow citizens. With your help, there is no doubt in my mind we will carry Michigan and earn 4 more years from the American people.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all.

The best reason for 4 more years is to make sure that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. I'm really proud of Laura. She is a great role model. She is steady, a calming influence when the Nation needed calm. She understands the importance of reading in the lives of our fellow citizens. She loves libraries. She loves books. She's been an inspiration to the women in Afghanistan. She has been an inspiration to women all over the world. Laura Bush is a great First Lady, and I'm lucky she's my wife.

When you're out there gathering up the vote, remind them about the team that I have put together on behalf of the American citizens. I've asked people from all walks of life to serve in my Cabinet. I've put together people who are smart and capable, people who are dedicated to the service of our country. Our country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother heard me say that one time. She said, "Wait a minute." [*Laughter*]

Today I had the privilege of traveling from Washington to South Bend then to Niles and now here to Kalamazoo with a really fine Member of the United States Congress, Congressman Fred Upton.

I want to thank secretary of State Terri Lynn Land for joining us today. Secretary, thanks for coming. A good sign when the speaker and the majority leader of the senate show up. Leader Ken Sikkema is with us as well as Speaker Rick Johnson. Thank you both for coming. I'm glad you all are here. Thank you.

And I want to thank the local officials who are here and the State officials. Thank you all for taking time out to come by to say hello. I'm proud you're here. My only advice is, fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my friend Betsy DeVos, who is with us today. She represents all the grassroots activists who are here in the crowd. I want to thank you for what you're doing to make sure that people get to the polls. Thank you for coming.

I want to thank the men and women who wear our uniform who are here today. I've had the high honor of being the Commander in Chief of some of the finest citizens our country has every produced. I've been to bases all across our country and all across the world, and I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, freedom is in the hands of some mighty fine people.

This is going to be a tough campaign. That's why I'm here asking for your help. We got a lot of work to do. We got a lot of work to do together. I'm running against an experienced candidate, somebody who spent a lot of time in Washington in the Halls

of the United States Senate. I'm not going to take him lightly. He's a worthy opponent, and that's why we've got to do everything we can to convince people to go to the polls. We've got to convince people to listen to the message.

My opponent has been there long enough to develop the Washington language. I call it Washingtonitis. [*Laughter*] The other day in Washington, they asked him about what kind of car he has. [*Laughter*] Here in the State of Michigan, he was asked that question. Of course, this is the great auto-producing State. He said, "Well, we've got some SUVs." He talked about having a couple of minivans and a big Suburban. Last month on Earth Day—[*laughter*]—he had a little different description of the fleet. He said, "I don't own an SUV." To clear up the confusion, he said this: "The family has it. I don't have it." [*Laughter*] In other words, he doesn't have an SUV except when he's in Michigan. [*Laughter*] One guy is getting a lot of mileage out of one SUV.

What this country needs is a leader who speaks clearly, and when he says something, he means it. You've got to tell the people what you intend to do and then go out and do it.

We've done a lot for the last 3 years. We've dealt with emergencies and wars and recessions. But there's a lot to do. Today I want to tell you about the course I intend to put this Nation on for the next 4 years. I want this country to be safer and stronger and a better nation.

I've come to Kalamazoo to ask for your help but also to let you know, I see clearly where I want to lead this Nation. And my most important duty is to make sure this country is safe. My most important duty is to speak clearly about the challenges we face. There's still an enemy that would like to strike America. On September the 11th, our world changed. On September the 11th, we realized that oceans wouldn't protect us and that, because of what we believe, there's an enemy that wants to hurt us. That's the reality that we now face.

I have a solemn duty to do everything I can to protect America, and we made a lot of changes in Washington. The communication between the intelligence agencies and law enforcement are a lot better. The ports are better guarded. As you know, the airplanes are safer. They're even looking at your shoes. [*Laughter*] We got a lot of good people working hard. We have to be right 100 percent of the time, but the enemy has to be right only once. The best way to protect the homeland is to go on the offensive, is to stay on the offensive, and is to bring the killers to justice.

There are some who question whether America is really at war. In other words, they think that this is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence matter that confronts the country. But that's what we thought after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. We thought it was a law enforcement and intelligence matter. And yet the enemy was planning more sophisticated attacks. The enemy was using training bases in Afghanistan. Those who believe that way, in my judgment, are absolutely wrong. This isn't a matter of intelligence and law enforcement. This is a matter of war. The enemy declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got.

And we're making progress—we're making progress. About two-thirds of the known Al Qaida leadership are—have been brought to justice, and we're chasing down the rest of them. We're chasing down the rest of them. Right after September the 11th, I laid out a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." When an American President lays down such a doctrine, he better mean what he says. For the sake of keeping—for the sake of peace and freedom, when the American President speaks, he better mean it. I meant what I said, and the Taliban in Afghanistan found out I meant what I said.

There are no longer Al Qaida training camps in Afghanistan. In other words, America is more secure. Afghanistan is heading toward democracy and freedom. The thing I really like about our action, besides making America more safe and secure, is the fact that we liberated people. There were people in the clutches—it's hard to believe this if you're an American citizen, because of the nature of our society, but there are young

girls—were young girls growing up in Afghanistan who never had a chance to go to school. It's just beyond our comprehension, isn't it, that people would be that barbaric, that backwards. These people were enslaved to a backward ideology, and thanks to America and our allies, people are now free in Afghanistan, and the world is better off for it.

The American President must be a realist. He must see the world the way it really is. And after September the 11th, I learned this lesson, and it's the lesson that we must keep in our minds as we protect our country: When we see a gathering threat, we just can't hope it goes away. If we see a threat, given the lesson of September the 11th, this Nation must lead the world to deal with that threat.

I looked at the intelligence and the history in Iraq and saw a threat. The Congress, the Members of the United States Congress looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council on my watch looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. But it also had seen a threat from the past and no wonder. Saddam Hussein was a man who used weapons of mass destruction against his own people and in his neighborhood. Saddam Hussein made his hatred of America well known. He was a threat. He paid suiciders to go kill innocent Israeli citizens. He had terrorist connections.

In other words, we all saw a threat. I saw a threat. The Congress saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council saw a threat—to the point where they passed a unanimous resolution that said, "Mr. Saddam Hussein, disarm, or face serious consequences."

As I just told you, when the President speaks, he better mean what he says. As he had done for year after year after year, Saddam Hussein didn't answer the request of the free world. So I was faced with a choice: Do I take the word of a madman? Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001, and hope for the best? Or do I take actions necessary to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Thanks to our fantastic military and thanks to over 30 other nations, Iraq is becoming a free society. Thanks to our fantastic military and thanks to friends and allies, the torture chambers in Iraq are closed. Thanks to the United States and friends and allies, the long-suffering people of Iraq now have hope. They have hope to live like we want to live, in a free society, in a peaceful society, and a chance to raise your children in a hopeful environment.

We're on a very difficult mission right now, and it's tough work. It's tough work because there are a few who want to destroy the hopes of many. It's tough work because we're dealing with people with no conscience. They're willing to kill innocent Iraqis, or they're willing to kill coalition forces in order to stop the march of freedom, in order to not allow liberty to take root and to spread its wings in a part of the world that needs freedom and needs liberty. They're doing everything in—they can to shake our will. America will not allow freedom to lose in Iraq because of a bunch of thugs and assassins.

Like you, I mourn the loss of life. Like you, I hurt when a mom or a dad loses a loved one, and I have told them when I've met them in person that the mission of their son or daughter was a vital mission to the long-term security of the United States. Because you see, a free society in the part of the world that breeds resentment will be a peaceful influence in a part of the world that needs peace. These are historic times. These are really important times in our country.

I told the story the other day at the press conference about my—Laura and my dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. He is the Prime Minister of Japan. And we were talking about how to work together to keep the peace on the Korean Peninsula. Kim Chong-il is a danger. Kim Chong-il is developing nuclear weapons. And so, working with a former enemy, it dawned on me during the course of the conversation: What happens if we had got it wrong at the end of World War II? Would I have been talking to the Prime Minister of Japan about a way to make the world a peaceful place? It also dawned on me, when we get it right in Iraq, when freedom and democracy take hold in that part of the world, someday an American President will be talking to an elected Iraqi leader as to how to deal with the current threat of that era. These are historic times.

Our troops are performing brilliantly, and we will succeed.

There are plenty of others in the world who agree with the spread of freedom and democracy. Thank goodness. See, I understand, freedom is not America's gift to the world or any other country's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman who lives in this world.

We have a duty to spread freedom. We have an obligation to spread freedom, and we're getting plenty of help. There's a difference, however, between leading a coalition of nations and submitting to the objections of a few. I'll always work with other countries. If I'm fortunate enough to be your President for 4 more years, we'll continue to build alliances and to work with other nations to spread freedom and make the world more peaceful. But I will never turn America's national security decisions over to leaders of other countries.

I've come to Kalamazoo to tell you, I've got a clear vision on what we need to do to make the world more free and more peaceful. I've come to let you know that a priority of mine over the next 4 years will be to do everything in our power as a nation to safeguard the American people.

I also have come to let you know that I've got a plan to make sure that America is a strong nation, and that starts with making sure that our economy is strong in every part of our country. I'm an optimistic fellow because I have seen what this Nation has been through. I'm also optimistic because I know how strong the entrepreneurial spirit is in America, how vibrant our economy is because the people are hopeful and optimistic.

Remember what our economy has been through. We've been through a recession. When we came to office, the country was headed into a recession. That's a long word for, "We're going backwards." [*Laughter*] It's a long word for, "Dismal times," where people were worried about their jobs and small businesses were worried about meeting the payroll.

We started to come out of the recession, and then the enemy hit us. September the 11th affected the economy. It hurt. It hurt us because we realized we were a battlefield in the war on terror. We lost a lot of jobs. Remember, the airlines weren't flying for a while. The stock market was shut down. It was a tough period. We came out of that. America refused to be intimidated, refused to relent.

And then we found out we had some citizens in our country that forgot what it meant to be a responsible citizen, and they didn't tell the truth. The corporate scandals affected the economy. You see, in a market-oriented economy, you've got to have faith in the balance sheet, faith in the numbers. There were some people who broke the faith. We passed tough laws. We will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

The decision to deal with Saddam Hussein also affected the economy. You might remember on the TV screens, it said "March to War." That's not a conducive environment in which to risk capital. Marching to war is an incredibly negative thought. Fortunately, now we're marching to peace.

But all those were overcome because the spirit of America is a strong spirit. And the small-business sector of this economy stepped up. People started to invest. People refused to be pessimistic. People decided to make good decisions about the economy, and I believe one of the main reasons why is because of the tax cuts we delivered for the American people.

The proper role of the Government is to make sure that the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, that the environment for taking risk is good. Cutting taxes was essential to making sure that that was the case. And remember, we just didn't cut taxes on a few. We cut taxes on everybody who paid taxes. We raised the child credit to make it easier to raise a family. We reduced the marriage penalty. What kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? We want to strengthen families in America. Small businesses benefited. Families benefited.

The tax relief and the economic stimulus package we passed is working. The economy grew at the rate of 4.2 percent in the first quarter. We were in recession in early '01. Early '04, we're growing at the rate of 4.2 percent. Economic growth over the past three quarters has been the fastest in nearly two decades. This economy is beginning to move.

I understand that Michigan still suffers. My attitude is, when I hear one person is looking for work, we got to make sure we continue to grow the economy. And while the growth numbers, the job numbers were good in certain parts of our country, they were slower in Michigan. But the plans we put in place should help those workers. We got to make sure that we don't go backwards and undo the good works we have done. Part of the vision for the next 4 years is to make sure this economy is healthy and strong with pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-entrepreneur economic policies.

Let me tell you a couple of people I met today, just to maybe put this economic plan in perspective. I met the O'Roarks, Tom and Beth. They're with us. There they are, right. And they got two kids, and the reason I bring them is that the tax relief plan we passed saved them $1,700. That's good. That may not seem like a lot to some. It's a lot to them. They'll save $1,700 this year too. That's their money by the way. When somebody has got more of their own money, they're going to demand additional good or a service. And when that demand goes up, somebody produces the good or a service. And when somebody produces it, somebody is likely to find work.

No, the tax relief was important for our economy, but it's also important for families all across the country, like the O'Roarks. I said the other day, our tax relief is showing that Americans can spend their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Factory orders are up. Manufacturing is coming back. I tell you a statistic I love about our Nation right now: More people own a home. See, the homeownership rate is incredibly high, and not only that, more minorities own their own home. I tell you what's beautiful about that: We want more people owning something in America. We want people owning their own business. We want people owning and managing their own retirement accounts. We want more people owning their own home because this administration understands when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

It's very important that fiscal policy understand the importance of small businesses in our society. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small-business owners. Good fiscal policy, good economic policy focuses on the small-business sector—should focus on the small-business sector of America. I want you to know that an inherent part of the economic plan that we put forward is creating incentives for small business to expand.

Most small businesses in America are Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. Those are legal terms describing what kind of taxes they pay, basically. If you're a sole proprietorship or a Subchapter S corporation, you pay tax at the individual income tax rate. Therefore, when you hear us saying we're going to reduce individual income taxes, we're really reducing taxes as well on small businesses. The more a small business has in its coffers, the more likely it is it's going to expand. If 70 percent of new jobs are created by small businesses and you're worried about job creation, it seems to make sense to provide stimulus to the small-business sector of the economy.

I was talking to Jim Van Zoeren. He runs a trucking company—Big Jim—and he's an upbeat guy. He's going to invest about $4 million in trucks and trailers and forklifts this year. He's a small-business guy. He's willing to invest. "Invest" means he's going to buy something from somebody. And when he buys it from somebody, somebody has got to make it.

In other words, the economy works as a result of the decisionmaking process from people like Jim. He has already hired 20 workers in the year 2004 to meet that investment. In other words, when you hear investment is up, you hear the tax plan encouraged investment, think jobs. Because there's 20 more people working for his firm as a result of the investments that he made. He's planning to hire 10 more this year. See, when Jim hires 30 people this year, there's people like him—it says something's happening. There's people like him all across the country. There's a lot of small businesses and entrepreneurs who are optimistic and hopeful, who have had their decisionmaking helped by good tax policy. And I intend to keep it that way. One reason I need to stay in office

is to make sure that we don't ruin the incentives and don't stop the momentum of economic growth by failed Washington, DC, policies.

One thing you better watch out for are spending promises on a campaign. And you've got to take these promisers for their word. My opponent is a pretty good spender. We've got 6 more months to go in the campaign, and he's easily over a trillion in new promises. And so the question that I ask is, how is he going to pay for it? He said, of course, by taxing the rich. There's not enough money to tax the rich to pay for the new promises he's made. So guess who he is going to tax? He's going to tax you. That's what's going to happen. In order to meet all the promises he's making, he's going to have to raise the taxes on the American people.

Now is not the time to be raising taxes. This economy is getting strong. This economy is getting better. A tax increase on the American people, a tax increase on small-business owners, a tax increase on moms and dads who are trying to raise their families, raising that marriage penalty up is the wrong policy at the wrong time, and we're not going to let him have a chance to do so.

There is more to do to make sure this economy is the best place to do business in the world. If you're interested in jobs growing here in America, if you're interested in jobs staying here, I got some ideas that I want to share with you right quick. First, we cannot let Congress raise taxes on you. Raising taxes on the American people will make the country less competitive and will make it harder for people to find a job.

Secondly, we've got to make sure we've got good worker training programs. Listen, technology is changing. There are—changing the workforce. And the demand for workers—there's all kinds of jobs in America, but oftentimes, workers need new skills. They need new training. The community college system in America is a fantastic place to match up workers who want to find new skills with employers looking for new workers. I've got a plan called the Jobs for the 21st Century program to do just that.

We've got to make sure that health care costs are more affordable, and we must do so without letting the Federal Government run the health care industry. That's why I'm for association health care plans and health savings accounts, and that's why I am for medical liability reform at the Federal level, to stop the junk and frivolous lawsuits which are running up the cost of medicine.

You know, most American Presidents have opened up our markets to foreign products. That's good for consumers. When you get more products to choose from, it helps on price; it helps on quality. The problem is, a lot of American Presidents haven't said to other nations, "Open up your markets." The best way to make sure that we have jobs for the 21st century, the best way we make sure that people can find work is reject economic isolationism and make sure the playing field is level. Listen, American workers, American farmers, American ranchers can compete with anybody, any time, anyplace so long as the rules are fair.

We need to make sure we get an energy policy in this country. We want to make sure that people are able to find work in the 21st century. This Nation needs an energy policy. I've laid out a plan to encourage conservation. I've laid out a plan to develop alternative sources of energy. Listen, I want to be the person that lays the groundwork for a President to be able to say, "Hey, the corn harvest was up, and we're less dependent." We need alternative sources of energy to be developed in this country. We've got research and development—ongoing research and development to encourage that. We need clean coal technology. We need to be exploring for natural gas in our own hemisphere. We need safe nuclear energy. We need a full-scale energy plan to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I'm running because I got a plan to make sure we're the best place to do business, so people can find work. I'm running because I understand what it means to keep America competitive in the world. We live in a global economy. I'm also running because I want to keep us—I want to enable us to be the innovative society that we are. Listen, we need to have broadband technology in every home in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and every farm in rural Michigan as well.

The role of Government is not to create wealth, but an environment in which the entrepreneur, the imagination, the genius of the American people can survive, and that's why I need 4 more years as your President.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Finally, I want to talk about something that's dear to my heart because—and it's because I understand the true strength of the country, and that is, my job is to rally the compassion of America to help save lives in this country. Look, Government is not a loving organization. [*Laughter*] Government is justice. Government is law. But Government is not loving. Love exists in the hearts and souls of the American citizens. The true strength of this country is not our military, although it's an important part of keeping the peace. The true strength of the country is not the fact that we're a very strong economy relative to other nations in the world. The true strength of the country is the hearts and souls of the American people, and I understand that.

I also understand that many problems can be only solved by love. Many problems can only be solved when a decent citizen takes time out of their life and says, "How can I help you, brother? What can I do to make your life better?"

No, the job of the President is to understand the proper relationship between the Government and the strength of the country. And the job of the President is to call upon that strength and rally that strength and encourage that strength to help save America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

And that's why I have pushed so hard for what I call the Faith- and Community-Based Initiative that says to people, "Let us not focus on the process in Washington, DC. Let's focus on the results." And if there's a faith community that's got the capacity to change hearts and, therefore, help an addict on drugs, we ought not to fear empowering that program. We ought to encourage that program through Government help.

I met Iris and Louie Tortorelli here today. Where are the Tortorellis? There they are. [*Applause*] Thank you all. Nice spattering of applause there for them. [*Laughter*] They're mentors. These are people that have lived a full life, and they want to live a fuller life by taking time out to help a child learn to read—what a wonderful gift, not only a gift to the child but a gift to them.

Like many of you in the audience, they are soldiers in the army of compassion. I'm sure I'm looking at people that have heard that call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself, people who are willing to do simple acts of kindness and love to help brighten somebody's day. These good folks are mentoring children, elementary school children. Here's what Louie said. He said, "It's so rewarding to work with the kids. I'm excited about what I'm doing. I can't do much physical work anymore, but I can do that."

I want to thank Iris and Louie for setting such a fine example. I want to thank you all as well. It's really part of what I call ushering in a new culture, the responsibility era, I like to call it. It's a different kind of culture from one that we had been through in the country, the culture that said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else." I envision a new culture, and it's happening, not because of me but because of America, where each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you're a mom or a dad, you are responsible for loving your children with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. Each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor like we'd like to be loved yourself. It's happening here in America. It's happening, because the strength of this country is the character of the American people.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I will never forget that day. There were workers in hardhats shouting, "Whatever it takes." A guy pointed at me and said, "Don't let me down." As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. You took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I

will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

I want to again thank you for coming. We have a purpose together. We have a mission. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of this country. That is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:30 p.m. at Wings Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Speaker Rick Johnson and Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, Michigan State Legislature; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Statement on the Enlargement of the European Union

May 3, 2004

I applaud the action by the European Union (EU) to welcome into their membership 10 new countries from Central Europe and the Mediterranean. This enlargement will bring opportunity and hope to millions of Europeans. Along with NATO's expansion, the EU's enlargement further unites the new and the established democracies of Europe and helps create a Europe whole, free, and at peace. We welcome the prospect of further enlargement of the EU to qualified countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, and we support Turkey's European Union aspirations.

This new European Union will more effectively play its essential role as a force for democracy, prosperity, and stability. This action strengthens the enduring partnership between the United States and Europe and marks a major advance for the common values and purposes of our transatlantic community.

Remarks in Sterling Heights, Michigan

May 3, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. It is great to be back in Michigan. In case you haven't heard, we're on the George W. Bush bus tour. It's my way to let the people of Michigan know how much I appreciate their support, how much I'm counting on your support. It's my way of letting you know I want to win and be President for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all for coming. The first thing is I'd like to ask you to volunteer in the campaign. Get your neighbors to register to vote. Put the signs up. Talk to people from all walks of life and tell them this, that I've got a positive vision for the future of this country. I've got a positive vision for winning the war on terror and to spreading peace and freedom throughout the world, a positive vision for creating jobs and opportunity for every single American, a positive vision for capturing the great spirit of this country so every citizen has a chance to realize their dreams. I've got a goal to make sure this country is safer and stronger and better. I will leave no doubt where we stand, and we will win on November the 2d.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We've had a fabulous day today. It's been somewhat diminished by the fact that Laura had to go home early. No, I know, you drew the short straw. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of reasons why I think I need to be reelected, but for certain, one of the most important reasons is to make sure that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I can't tell you how proud I am of Laura. She is a fantastic First Lady. She is the love of my life. I am really proud of her, and I appreciate the job she has done.

She loves the children of America. She understands the importance of teaching every child to read. And she sends her very best to all our friends here in the Detroit area of the great State of Michigan.

I picked a really good man to be the Vice President of the United States in Dick Cheney. I want to thank Congresswoman Candice Miller for being my State campaign coordinator. I appreciate so very much Congressman Joe Knollenberg for being here today. Congressman Mike Rogers is with us as well.

I want to thank the secretary of state Terri Lynn Land for—Terri Lynn just drove with us from Kalamazoo here to the Detroit area on the George W. Bush bus.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank my friend Travis Tritt for coming up from Nashville. I appreciate it. Billy Cerveny—I appreciate both of these great artists for coming today. I'm honored to have your support and your friendship. It means a lot to me.

The last 3 years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with the stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession. We delivered historic tax relief, and now our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized country in the world. We uncovered corporate crimes that cost people their jobs and their savings, so we passed strong corporate reforms, brought the wrongdoers to account, and made it clear we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. We pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. The rest of them will learn there is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, so we ended two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to stand against tyranny and to set nations free.

When Dick Cheney and I came to office, we found a military that was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our military the resources and the respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. The President needs to step up to make the hard decisions and to keep his commitment, and that is how I will continue to lead our Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Great events will turn on this election. The man who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. The security and prosperity of America are at stake. The stakes are high.

I'll have a tough race, and that's why I'm counting on your help. I'm running against an experienced United States Senator.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in Washington for quite a long time. He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He voted for the PATRIOT Act. He voted for NAFTA. He voted for No Child Left Behind, and he voted for the use of force in Iraq. Now he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been on both sides of big issues. And if he could find a third side—[*laughter*]. He recently gave us another example of his technique. Last winter, my opponent was in Michigan and somebody asked him about the cars he had. [*Laughter*] Here in the great auto-producing State, he said, quote, "We have some SUVs." He was talking about having a couple of minivans and a big Suburban. Last month, on Earth Day, Senator Kerry had a different description of his fleet. [*Laughter*] He said, and I quote,

"I don't own an SUV." To clear up the confusion he said, "The family has it. I don't have it." [*Laughter*] In other words, he doesn't have an SUV except when he's in Michigan. [*Laughter*] Now, there's a fellow who's getting a lot of mileage out of his Suburban. [*Laughter*]

Whatever he drives, the voters this year will have a clear choice. It is a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people. It is a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger.

The other side hasn't offered much in the way of strategies to win the war or policies to help people find work. We're well into the campaign, and all we hear is bitterness and outbursts instead of calm debate. They will find out that anger is not an agenda for the future of America. I will take on the big issues with optimism and resolve and determination. And I will make it clear, we stand ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. With the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands of those who earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Government would have.

We've overcome some tough challenges in this country, but I'm an optimist, because I understand the entrepreneurial spirit of America. I've seen small-business owners dream big dreams. I know you're facing economic challenges here in the great State of Michigan. Manufacturing communities have been especially hard hit. There are workers who are concerned about their jobs. I understand that—I understand that. Our economy is in a time of transition, and if you're the one going through transition, it's not an easy experience.

Workers and businesses in Michigan are meeting the challenges, though, with energy and optimism because of good policy. Because of the hard work of the people of this State and other States, our economy is strong, and it is growing stronger.

The economy grew at a strong rate of 4.2 percent in the first quarter of this year. Economic growth over the past three quarters has been the fastest in nearly two decades. In March, America added 308,000 new jobs, the highest monthly job growth total in almost 4 years; 5,900 of those new jobs was created here in Michigan.

Across this country, manufacturing activity is increasing. Business investment is rising. Disposable income is up. Inflation is low. Mortgage and interest rates are low. Homeownership is at the highest rate ever. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponent has a different view of letting the American people keep more of their own income. When we passed an increase in the child credit to help families, he voted no. When we reduced the marriage penalty, he voted against it. When we created a lower 10-percent tax rate for working families, he voted no. When we gave small businesses a tax incentive to expand and hire, he voted against it.

When tax increases are proposed, it's a lot easier to get a "yes" vote out of him. [*Laughter*] He voted for taxes over—for higher taxes over 350 times since he's been a United States Senator. He supported gas tax increases 11 times and once favored an increase of 50 cents a gallon.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. By the way, it costs you $5 every time you filled up your car. For that, he at least ought to throw in a free car wash. [*Laughter*]

He's also proposing a lot of new spending. You've got to be careful about these folks that go around the country making promises with your money. He's increased spending over a trillion dollars, and we're just getting started in the campaign. He says he's going to pay for it by raising taxes on the rich. But he's got a problem—he's got a problem. All that new spending can't raise enough money—can't be paid for by raising money on the rich. Guess who he's going to raise taxes on: You. In order to pay for that new spending he's promised, he's either going to break the promise, or he's going to have to

raise the taxes on the hard-working American people. And we're not going to let him have a chance to do so.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. See, you and I understand that higher taxes would undermine growth and destroy jobs just as our economy is getting stronger. To help grow the American economy and to create more jobs for American workers, I've got a better idea: We should keep the tax rates low. We should not raise taxes on the American people.

I want to be your President for 4 more years because I got a plan to make sure our country is the strongest economy in the world so people can find work. I have a plan to protect small-business owners and employees from frivolous lawsuits and needless regulations. We got a plan to help control the cost of health care by giving people better access through health savings accounts and association health care plans. I understand what frivolous lawsuits do to the cost of medicine. We need medical liability reform at the Federal level.

In order to make sure this economy is strong over the next decade, we need to have an energy plan. We need to encourage conservation, alternative sources of energy, but we need clean coal technology. We need exploration for natural gas. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep this economy strong and to make sure we're the leader in the world in economic growth so people can find work, I will continue to knock down trade barriers in foreign countries. Listen, we're the best in the world at growing things and manufacturing things in the high-tech world. All our people need is a level playing field. We should reject economic isolationism and work to make sure that our workers are treated fairly in overseas markets.

Empty talk about jobs and economic isolationism won't get anybody hired. The way to make sure this country is strong and people can find work is to reelect a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business President, and that is George W. Bush.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Our future also depends on America's leadership in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists are testing our will in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

This Nation is strong and confident in the cause of freedom. And today, no friend or enemy doubts the word of the United States of America. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban chose defiance, and the Taliban are no longer in power. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Iraq. The dictator chose defiance, and now the dictator sits in a prison cell.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget and America must never forget. America must confront threats before they fully materialize. In Iraq, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of Congress looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. As a matter of fact, the previous administration and the Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council, yet again, demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply. I remembered the history of this man. He invaded his neighbors. He hated America. He had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He paid for suiciders——

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

The President. ——he paid for suiciders to attack Israelis. He had ties to terrorists. So I had a choice: Either take the word of a madman, or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. My opponent admits that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He just didn't support my decision to remove Saddam from power. Maybe he was hoping Saddam would lose the next Iraqi election. [*Laughter*]

We showed the dictator and a watching world that America means what it says. Because we acted, Saddam's torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, Iraq's weapons programs are ended forever. Because we acted, nations like Libya got the message and renounced their own weapons programs. Because we acted, an example of democracy is rising at the very heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more free, and America is more secure.

On the ground in Iraq, we still face serious challenges. It's hard work, but it's necessary work. Illegal militias and remnants of the regime, joined by foreign terrorists, are trying to take by force the power they could never gain by the ballot. They know a free Iraq will be a major defeat for the cause of terror. These groups have found little support among the Iraqi people. And they will find no success in their attempts to shake the will of America. You see, they don't understand our country. We will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. A free Iraq is an historic opportunity to change the world for the better. A free Iraq will be a peaceful Iraq, and we're implementing a clear strategy in Iraq. First, we will ensure there's an atmosphere of security as Iraqis move toward self-government. We support the effort of local Iraqis to convince the radicals to disarm. We made it clear that militias in Najaf and elsewhere must disarm, or they will face serious consequences. American and coalition forces are in place, and we are fully prepared to bring security and order in Fallujah and Najaf and around the country of Iraq.

The second element of our strategy is to return sovereignty to the people of Iraq on the schedule that we agreed to. We must keep our word. Like any proud people, Iraqis want to manage their own affairs, and I believe they can. It's a common goal we share. So on June 30th, a sovereign Iraq interim government will take office. We will still have hard work to do. These are not easy tasks, but they are essential tasks. We will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

On national security, Americans have the clearest possible choice. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world but only if other countries do not object.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm all for united action. We built strong coalitions. There are more than 30 coalition partners in Iraq right now. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We have a different point of view on security matters. Over the years, my opponent has opposed many of the aircraft and weapons programs, including the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the Tomahawk Cruise Missile you build right here in Michigan, programs that are vital to our Nation's defense and programs that are now helping us win the war on terror. Last year, he voted against funding for ammunition and supplies and body armor for our troops on the frontlines of the war on terror.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Someone recently asked Senator Kerry why he voted against the 87 billion supplemental bill to fund those essential needs for our troops, and here is what he said: "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] The President must speak clearly and mean what he says.

Some are skeptical the war on terror is really a war at all. Again, my opponent says the war on terror is far less a military operation and far more an intelligence-gathering, law enforcement operation. I disagree. Our Nation followed this approach after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. The matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled. But the terrorists were still training in Afghanistan. They were still plotting in other nations. They were still drawing up more ambitious plans.

After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. With those attacks,

the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got.

Our men and women in the military are taking great risks, and they're doing great work. At bases across our country and the world, I have had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. And I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

Audience members. Bush! Bush! Bush!

The President. This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the hearts and souls of the American citizens. We are strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We are strong because of the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We will not stand for Government discrimination against people of faith.

We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We will not stand for any attempt to weaken those reforms and to send people back into lives of dependence.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We will not stand for the treatment of any life as a commodity to be experimented upon or exploited or cloned.

We stand for the confirmation of judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law. We will not stand for judges who undermine democracy by legislating from the bench or judges who try to remake the values of America by court order.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of our country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you're a mom or a dad, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of the leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget that day. The workers in the hardhats were shouting, "Whatever it takes." One man pointed at me and said, "Don't let me down." As we did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to the enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In these times, I've also been witness to the character of this Nation. Not so long ago, some had their doubts about the America character, our capacity to meet serious challenges or to serve a cause greater than self-interest, but Americans have given their answer. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country, and we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all of these qualities for the work ahead. We've got work to do for this Nation. We've got 4 more years to make—[*applause*].

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We've got 4 more years to make sure that we win the war on terror. The world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

I'm honored to have your support. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:44 p.m. in the Jerome-Duncan Theatre at Freedom Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land; and country music entertainers Travis Tritt and Billy Cerveny. The transcript of these remarks was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 4.

Remarks in Maumee, Ohio

May 4, 2004

The President. Thank you. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated.

Audience member. Ohio is Bush-Cheney country!

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. Nothing better than having a good pancake for breakfast—except I didn't get mine. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. *Viva Bush!*

The President. *Vamos a ganar.* That means, we're going to win. Gosh, it's exciting to be here. I'm here because I want you to know I have a reason to be your President for 4 more years. I see clearly where we need to go as a nation. I have a positive vision for our country and the world. I have a plan to win the war on terror and to spread freedom and peace. I have a plan to make sure prosperity reaches every corner of America so our citizens can realize the full promise of our country. I have a plan to tap into the deep compassion of America so the lonely will find help, so the children can be mentored, so that the hungry can be fed. I have a positive, optimistic vision for our country.

I'm here to ask for your help. I'm here to help you—I'm here to ask you to help me serve for 4 more years in the great country of America.

Here's the agenda. Together we can work together to make sure America is safer, stronger, and better. And I cannot do it without your help. And so, first, I want to thank my chairman. Bernie, thanks for your leadership. Thanks for all the people who put on this fantastic breakfast. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank those who are going to put up the signs. I want to thank those who are going to go to the community centers, to the religious congregations. I want to thank those who are going to go to your neighbors, both Republicans, Democrats. I want you to thank those who are going to go to the independents, and you remind them that we have a positive vision that benefits all of America.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. Yes, I know. She was on the bus trip yesterday but had to go back to Washington because, like me, she is—she works for the country. She's got something to do. She's got a scheduling conflict. [*Laughter*] But I tell you, she sends her love and her best. She is a fabulous First Lady. One of the main reasons to put me back in there—[*laughter*]—is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

I think when you're out there garnering the vote, convincing people to show up to vote, make sure you remind them that I put together a fantastic administration—good, solid Americans, people from all walks of life who have served our country, put their country above self-interest. I'm running with a fantastic man, a great Vice President in Dick Cheney.

I one time said to a crowd—and my mother was in the audience—I said, "Dick Cheney is the finest Vice President the country has ever had." [*Laughter*] Mother yelled out, "Wait a minute, buster!" [*Laughter*]

I want to thank your Governor, who's traveled with me today, Governor Bob Taft. I'm proud you're here, Governor. Thank you for coming. I want to thank Congressman Paul Gillmor for being here today. Congressman, I appreciate you coming. Larry Kaczala is with us, who is going to be elected to the United States Congress. I'm proud he's here. I know we got a lot of State and local officials. I'm proud you're here. I appreciate you being

here. I know there's some mayors here. I like to give advice to mayors. When you're the President, you can take liberties to give people advice. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate everybody bringing their families. There's some people bringing their families here. Go ahead and use me as a convenient excuse to skip school. Just tell them the President said, give you an "A."

I'm here seeking the vote. See, I believe you have to ask for the vote. I believe you've got to ask people for their help, and I believe you've got to ask for the vote. I've come to this important part of Ohio to say, "I need your help, and I want your vote." I want your vote come November the 2d. And with your help and with your vote, Ohio will be Bush country once again, and I will be the President of the United States.

I believe we've shown the country that I can put together an administration that knows how to lead, an administration that can handle the tough times, an administration that's steady and resolute, an administration clear of vision. And it's important that we not only talk about what has happened, but as importantly in a campaign, you talk about what you intend to do. And that's what I want to share some time with you today. I want you to tell your friends and neighbors, as we seek the vote, as we garner support, that this administration has done things. And the only reason we look past—to the past is to verify what we're going to do in the future to make this country safer and stronger and better.

I want you to know it's going to be a tough campaign. I'm under no illusions, and I look forward to it. My energy level is high. My enthusiasm for the job is strong. I have a deep desire to serve the American people for 4 more years, but it's going to be a tough contest. I'm fully aware of how tough it's going to be. I'm running against an experienced United States Senator. He's been there a long time. He's been there so long, he's just about on both sides of every issue. [*Laughter*]

Ohio is going to be a contested State. He's been here seeking endorsements. As you might remember, he claims to have picked up some important endorsements from foreign leaders. [*Laughter*] He just won't give us the names. [*Laughter*] He did drop a hint the other day. He insisted—and here's what he said, "What I said is true." This is my opponent speaking. He said, "What I said is true. I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." [*Laughter*] I got a hunch this whole thing might be a case of mistaken identity. [*Laughter*] Just because somebody has an accent—[*laughter*]—and a nice suit and a good table at a fancy restaurant in New York doesn't make them a foreign leader. [*Laughter*] But whoever these mystery men are, they're not going to be deciding this election. The American people will be deciding this election.

And the American people are going to have a clear choice in this election. It's a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people. It is a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger. And I look forward to making these choices abundantly clear to the people of Ohio and the American people.

I know what it takes to win the war on terror. My most important job is to make America a safer place. That's my most solemn duty, is to protect us from an enemy that hates what we stand for. On September the 11th, 2001, disaster struck many families in our country and struck our Nation. It made us realize that we're no longer immune from being a battlefield in a new kind of war. It was an historic moment in our country. It's necessary for the President to see clearly the challenges that we face, to understand clearly the tasks.

My opponent and others believe this matter is a matter of intelligence and law enforcement. I strongly disagree. See, that was the attitude we had before September the 11th, after the World Trade Center was attacked in 1993. They thought we could solve it with legal indictments. Some people thought the matter had been solved, but the enemy was plotting and planning and training. They served notice on us, and we're now serving notice on them. We're not going to just serve them with legal papers. We will use every asset at the disposal of the United

States Government to bring these killers to justice.

My most solemn duty, the most solemn duty of our administration is to do everything in our power to protect the American people. We got better intelligence sharing now. Our ports and borders are better guarded. Airports are little harder to fly in. Heck, they're looking at the shoes—[*laughter*]—but we want to know. It's our job. We have to be correct 100 percent of the time to protect you. The enemy only has to be right one time. So we've got a daunting task. And we're doing everything we can to button up the homeland, but the best way to win this war on terror is to stay on the offense, never relent, never yield, and bring people to justice before they have a chance to harm Americans.

And we're making progress. We're slowly but surely dismantling Al Qaida. I like to put it this way: There is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from the justice of the United States of America and our friends.

It's very important for the President of the United States to speak clearly and, when he says something, mean what he says. In order to make the world more peaceful and the world more free, when an American President speaks he better speak with authority, clarity, and certainty. And when he does speak, he better mean it. And so when I said to the world, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant exactly what I said, and the Taliban found out.

The Taliban no longer exists in power in Afghanistan, and the world is better off for it. America is more secure as a result of the actions that we took, not just America but others. America and the world is better off because the Taliban and their hatred and their barbaric ways no longer are in power.

Equally as important, the people of Afghanistan are better off as a result of the Taliban being out of power. I want you to remember—first of all, see the movie "Osama." It's an interesting portrayal, and it's a sad portrayal of what life was like for a young girl in Afghanistan under the Taliban. This child, of course, never had a chance to go to school, never had a chance to realize her potential, was literally enslaved by the barbaric behavior and attitude and ideology of these backward people. Not only did we uphold a doctrine, not only did we make America more safe and secure, this great, generous, compassionate country liberated—liberated—people from the clutches of tyranny and slavery, and I am proud of our Nation for doing so.

A President must understand that things changed on September the 11th and that when we see a threat overseas, it must not be allowed to materialize. In order to do our duty to make America safer, we must not take any threat for granted. We must never hope for the best. We must never hope that somebody might change their attitude, and therefore, the world will be more peaceful.

Listen, I saw intelligence, and it told me loud and clear that Saddam Hussein was a threat. The Congress, members of both political parties, looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council voted unanimously and said to Saddam Hussein, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." They said that, and I believed it was necessary because not only did we look at intelligence and saw a threat, we remembered his behavior. He used weapons of mass destruction on his own people and on his neighbors. He had terrorist ties. He was paying suiciders to kill innocent people in Israel. He was a man who was a destabilizing influence in the world. He's a person who hated what America stood for.

The United Nations Security Council acted. He defied once again. This wasn't the first time that he had said to the world, "I don't care what your demands are," and he defied—my attitude is when you say something, you better mean it. When you say, "Disarm, or face serious consequences," the world, when it speaks, better mean what it says in order to make the world more peaceful. So I had a choice to make: Either to take the word of a madman, a tyrant, a hater, or to defend America. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted, torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, there won't be any

more mass graves. Because we acted, because we kept our word, countries like Libya got the message and voluntarily disarmed. Because we acted, democracy is beginning to rise in the heart of a troubled region. Because we acted, the world is more peaceful, and America is more secure.

There's hard work left to be done in Iraq, and like you, I mourn anytime an American soldier loses his or her life. It's an incredibly sad moment for our country. I met with many families, and I've assured them that their loved one will not die in vain, that the mission we're on is an historic opportunity to make this country safer and the world more peaceful.

Freedom is an essential part of my vision for the future, because I know that free countries will be peaceful countries. I know that freedom, when it takes hold in the Middle East, will change the Middle East. The doctrine up to now has been for stability in the Middle East, and look where it's got us. I think we have to have a different strategy, a different vision, a different future, and that is to promote freedom and democracy in the part of the world that desperately needs freedom and democracy. See, freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty's gift to each man and woman in this world.

These are historic times. It's an historic opportunity. The Iraqi people, of course, are watching very carefully. See, most Iraqis, of course, want to be free. They want to live in a free society. Moms and dads want to raise their children in peaceful settings so their children can realize their dreams and fulfill their talents. That's what they want. And they're watching carefully the United States. They're watching to see how we react. They're watching to see whether we cut and run or whether we're good for our word. They don't have to worry about me. I don't care what the politics are. I don't care what the pressures are. We will make sure that we fulfill our mission and Iraq is free.

Either Iraq will be a camp for terror and tyranny, or Iraq will be a model for freedom and democracy. And I believe Iraq will be a model for freedom and democracy, and the world will be better off.

I love to tell the story about my dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. And Laura and I were visiting him in Tokyo, and we were having Kobe beef, by the way. And we were talking about North Korea. Amongst many of the topics we discussed, one of them was how to make sure the Korean Peninsula—what we can do together to make sure the Korean Peninsula is nuclear weapons-free. It's a vital mission. There's a tyrant in North Korea that wants to develop a nuclear weapon. And I, of course, believe that we ought to work with other nations to convince him not to have that nuclear weapon, and one of those nations is Japan.

And it dawned on me in the course of the conversation, that here I was talking to the leader of a former enemy. My dad went to the theater to fight Japan in World War II. Many of your dads—I'm sure we've got some veterans here who did the same thing—and here I am talking to the Prime Minister of Japan about how to keep the peace. And it dawned on me, what happens if we had gotten it wrong after World War II? Would I have been having this conversation? And also I realized that when we get it right in Iraq, some day an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq to discuss the threat of that era, about how best to safeguard America and the world.

These are historic times. This is a time in which the world has an opportunity to change for the better. America is leading the way. America won't relent. We'll stay steadfast. We will not let thugs and assassins shake our will. We will keep our promise to the Iraqi people, and the world will be better off for it.

There's a different attitude in this race, about foreign policy. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world but only if other countries do not object. [*Laughter*] I believe in forming alliances and coalitions. I understand how important it is to share intelligence. I know how important it is to work together to cut off finances that go to terrorists. I understand how important it is to share the burden of fulfilling our mission, which we have done. There's over—about 30 countries in Iraq that share the same vision we do. Now, I'm for—all for united action, but

I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

I have a vision to make sure that America is a strong country, and that starts with making sure our economy is strong. In order for us to be a leader in the world, in order for people to be able to realize their dreams, this economy has got to grow. And I'm optimistic about the future of this economy because I know what we have been through, and so do you, in this part of Ohio.

Let me remind you right quick about the short-term history, the economic history of our country. We've been through a recession. That is a relatively long word for meaning we were going backwards, that there was negative growth. Recession is a really tough time for families. Recession is tough times for small-business owners. Recession is a period of uncertainty. The stock market also started to decline in March of 2000. That makes people feel pitiful—not pitiful—it makes them feel more poor when you see your asset base drop, when you open up your retirement accounts and all of a sudden, the value is less.

We started to recover from that. Then the enemy hit us, and that affected our economy. It affected our national psyche, and it affected the economy. Remember, we had to shut down Wall Street; airplanes didn't fly. It was a traumatic time for the American economy.

We started to recover from that, and then we had some citizens who failed us because they didn't tell the truth. They forgot what it meant to be responsible in their work. There was corporate scandals. That affected our economy. We passed tough laws. People are now being held to account. We will not tolerate dishonesty in any boardroom in America.

And then I made the decision, as we just discussed, about securing America and liberating Iraq. And as you might remember, on the TV screens for a period of time, it said "March to War." That's not a positive thought. It's a—if you're a small-business owner and you're thinking about investing and you hear the country is marching to war, it is a—it's the kind of thing that dampens enthusiasm for capital investment.

But we've overcome all that. We're now marching to peace. But we've overcome all that, and the economy is strong. The economy is getting better. We're in a time of transition as well. The nature of the job base is beginning to shift, which provides opportunity. But if you're somebody whose job is being transitioned, it provides anxiety.

And I know there's a lot of people in this part of the State who are anxious about their job future. I clearly understand that, but because of the optimistic outlook of our society, because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, because we refuse to relent in the face of hardship, this country—this economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. And the people of Ohio are going to feel the economic vitality that's occurring across the country.

I say that because in the month of March, there were 7,900 new jobs created in Ohio—7,900 out of the 308,000 new jobs that were created in the month of March. In other words, 7,900 in March in Ohio, part of the 308,000. In other words, the job picture is improving. It's getting better. Economic vitality is strong. The first quarter growth rate was at 4.2 percent. The economic growth rate over the past three quarters has been nearly the fastest in two decades. Things are getting better.

The unemployment rate here has dropped from 6.3 percent to 5.7 percent. That's across the State of Ohio. I understand there are pockets of frustration and disappointment. But one thing is clear—and by the way, homeownership, the rate of homeownership is the highest it's ever been in our Nation's history. In other words, things are improving. The pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur agenda that we passed in Congress is working. Tax relief has made a difference to the economy.

Tax relief means people have got more money in their pocket. Tax relief means you've got more money to spend or save or invest. Tax relief means there's an increase in demand for goods and services. And in our society, when there's an increase of demand, somebody produces a good or a service to meet that demand, and when that happens, somebody is more likely to keep a job or find work.

The tax relief has made a huge difference in families, like Jeff and Katie Seevers' family. Where are Jeff and Katie? There they are. Thank you for coming. This good family—they've got three children. The tax relief provided them $2,200 last year and $2,200 this year of additional money for them to spend. I said—the other day I made a comment—I'll probably say the same thing tonight in Cincinnati—that the growth in our economy has shown that the American people are spending their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Jeff and Katie can spend their money better than the Congress, in our opinion. It's the cornerstone of our economic policy to trust them with their own money. They said they're going to build a new playroom in their house. That's good for the economy. In other words, they have made a different decision than they would have had they not gotten the tax relief. Somebody has got to build the playroom, unless old Jeff decides to do it himself. [*Laughter*] But when he hires somebody to build the playroom, somebody has got to buy the materials. When somebody buys the materials, somebody has got to manufacture the materials. In other words, when he makes a decision, it begins to ripple throughout the economy.

There are million of decisions being made in America as a result of the tax relief that is encouraging economic growth and economic vitality. Remember how the tax relief was structured. We said, "If you have a child, you're going to have your child credit increased." In other words, we want people to be able to better raise their families. We said, "We're going to try to reduce the effects of the marriage penalty." I mean, think about a Tax Code, by the way, that discourages marriage. It's the wrong signal. We want to encourage families in America. We want our families to be strong in this country.

We've created a 10-percent tax bracket to help people at the lower end of the economic ladder. In other words, we expanded opportunities by decreasing taxes on the American people, and that, of course, created a huge debate in Washington. There are some up there that would rather have your money to increase the size of Government. Our policies, our progrowth policy says the way to make sure people can find work is to increase your ability to spend your own money, your ability to make your own decisions with your own money, and it's a difference in this campaign.

An important point—when you're out there gathering the vote, explain to them our vision about economic growth. A lot of it has to do with making sure the small-business sector of our economy is vibrant and strong. An integral part of creating new jobs is to make sure the small-business owner and the entrepreneur have gotten more resources to spend. After all, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small-business owners and entrepreneurs. They're a vital part of any economic recovery.

So we did a couple of things in the tax relief package, in the progrowth package to encourage small businesses to grow. First, we've provided incentive for people to invest. In other words, when you invest, the Tax Code says you get a little extra tax break because we want people investing. We want people buying things. When a small business buys a piece of equipment, somebody has to manufacture that piece of equipment. And when somebody manufactures it, somebody is likely to find—to keep a job, and/or, if there's enough orders, they're going to expand the job base to make the new equipment that the small-business owner is trying to buy.

The other thing we did—and it's very important for our citizens to understand this—is that we cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes. See, the tendency is to say, "Well, you're deserving tax relief, and you're not deserving of tax relief." My attitude is, if you're going to have tax relief, everybody ought to get tax relief, and so we cut all rates.

Most small businesses are Subchapter S corporation or sole proprietorships. That's legal terminology for meaning that small businesses pay tax at the individual income tax rate. So when you hear us talking about cutting all rates, I want you to connect that with small business vitality. If you're a sole proprietorship and a Subchapter S, and all rates have been cut, it means you got more money as small-business owner to expand your business. If 70 percent of new jobs are

created by small businesses, it makes eminent sense. It's logical. It is important that the small-business sector of America receive benefits from tax relief, which is precisely what we did.

Mike McAlear is with us. He runs a manufacturing commission in Millbury. Where are you, Mike? There you go. He is—this has been a family business. There's a lot of family businesses. There's a lot of people who started their business in a garage and passed it on from one generation to the next—another reason we need to get rid of the death tax, by the way, is so he can pass his assets on to whoever he wants to. Mike hired 13—last year, he hired 13 workers, because he's optimistic about the future. He's going to invest $200,00 in new equipment. He'll save about $40,000 more because of the tax relief package we passed. In other words, there was an incentive for Mike to make the decision to buy $200,000 worth of equipment. He's going to need workers to run that equipment.

So when you hear that Mike is optimistic enough to hire 13 people, new workers last year and is thinking about hiring workers this year, that's a good sign. It means tax relief is working. It means there's a vitality alive here in the American economy. The best way for people of this part of the world to find a job is to make sure the small-business sector, businesses like Mike, are vibrant and strong and able to compete and willing to hire new workers, and that's precisely what's happening around America.

This campaign is going to be based upon understanding whose money we spend in Washington, DC, and how to make sure we're fiscally responsible enough in Washington so we don't raise your taxes. See, the economy is beginning to grow. The worst thing to do is to take money out of the people's pockets. The worst thing to do right now is to raise the taxes on the American people. I'm steadfast in my support of letting the people keep more of their own money. I have a question about my opponent's steadfastness. And I'll tell you why. Thus far in the campaign, he's proposed over a trillion dollars in new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a lot of promises, and we're just getting started. I mean, we're 6 months away; there's no telling how much more money he'll be putting out on the table. [*Laughter*] And he said he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. That's an old slogan we've heard before, isn't it? Yes. But guess who the rich is? That's you. Because there's not enough money when it comes to taxing the rich to pay for all these promises. So my——

Audience member. Is he going to tax his wife? [*Laughter*]

The President. Behave yourself. [*Laughter*]

See, he laid out all these promises, and he said he's going to do it by taxing the rich, but there's a huge funding gap. Either he's going to break his promises on spending, which I doubt, or he's going to raise your taxes, which I believe. And raising your taxes right now would be an economic disaster for America. We're not going to give him a chance to raise your taxes.

The job—the vision of this campaign is to make sure America is the leader in the world when it comes to the economy. That's the vision. The vision is to make sure we're the best place to do business in the world, in order for people to find work. The vision is to put practical, commonsense policies in place to make sure that we're on the leading edge of change.

I tell you what's important, is to make sure that we've got good tort reform in America. These frivolous and junk lawsuits make it awfully hard for small businesses. We're for people being able to have their day in court, but we fully understand the costs and the effects and how difficult it is for small businesses and others to be able to survive on the onslaught of junk and frivolous lawsuits.

Junk and frivolous lawsuits also affect the cost of health care. When you're a doc and you're afraid you're going to get sued, you practice defensive medicine, which runs up the cost to your health care. And in some places, docs just decide to quit practicing medicine. We need medical liability reform at the Federal level.

In order for people to be able to find work, we've got to make sure that we have practical policies to control the cost of health care. If you're a small-business owner, you're concerned about making sure your employees

have got health care. Association health care plans will enable small businesses to better compete. In other words, what we're saying is small businesses can pool their risk just like big businesses can, so they can afford better health care for their employees.

We need health savings accounts so customers are the decisionmakers in health care, not the Federal Government. The big debate in Washington, DC, is who best to control the health care. We believe consumers and patients and Americans ought to be the decisionmakers. Our opponent believes it's the Federal Government that ought to be making the health care decisions for America.

We've got to make sure we have an energy policy. Listen, if we want to be competitive in the 21st century, if we want our workers to be able to find jobs, we need an energy policy, an energy policy that encourages conservation, an energy policy that encourages alternative sources of energy, an energy policy that promotes clean coal technology, an energy policy that promotes safe nuclear policy, an energy policy that encourages exploration of natural gas in our own hemisphere and our own lands, an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure people are able to find work and America is the leading country in the world when it comes to economic growth, we need to promote an innovation society. We need to make sure we're on the leading edge of innovation. I'm a strong supporter in research and development. I believe there ought to be broadband technology in every home by the year 2007. And shortly thereafter, there ought to competing services so you get a better price and better quality. Broadband technology is going to be one of the important parts about changing America and to make sure we're on the leading edge.

But one of the things that's interesting, if you're the most innovative country in the world and—one of the real challenges we face is to make sure people are educated. You see, technology can race through an economy and literally change how we do business and create fantastic opportunities. But if people are not educated, if they don't have the skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century, America will not be the leading nation in the world.

We started by changing the whole way we run our public schools in America. First, we haven't changed the decisionmaking process. Local control of schools must be an integral part of any government policy when it comes to public education. But for the first time, in return for Federal money, mainly aimed at Title I students, the poorer students, we're saying, "Show us, Ohio, or any other State, whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract." You see, we believe in high expectations. We believe every child can learn, regardless of the color of their skin. We expect every child to learn.

We oppose a system which simply shuffles children through. In other words, there are some places where, if your parent doesn't speak English as a first language, the school says, "You're too hard to educate. Let's move you through." There's some school districts where a roomful of inner-city kids are—"It's too tough to teach you to read. Let's just move through." Those days are ended. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. And if the schools don't perform, the parents ought to have other options. And we're going to get it right early. We're going to get it right early, before it's too late.

But the economy changes, there's older workers that need help. I've got a robust plan to make sure that they get the training they need to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Some manufacturing jobs are going away. They're being replaced by high-tech jobs or jobs in the health care field. And the challenge to make sure America is competitive is to make sure those workers in the industries that are shrinking have an opportunity to be retrained for the jobs of the 21st century.

It's happening all across America, mainly at community colleges. One of the greatest assets we have in America and a part of my vision for making sure we provide productivity training—where we increase the productivity of our workers through training—is to use the community college system to match employers who are looking for workers with willing workers, so they get the skills they need to become a more productive worker for higher pay and a better standard of living for their families.

This is going to be a debate about the future of the country and the future of our economy. A strong America means that we have a strong economy today and are able to compete tomorrow. That's the whole debate. It's essential that we reject economic isolationism. It's essential we be a confident nation. Listen, most trade policy in the past has been to open up our markets to foreign goods. That's good for consumers. You see, when you've got more products from which to choose, you get better price and better quality. It's a market-oriented approach to goods coming in. The problem is we haven't been opening up markets overseas.

Listen, we're really good at things here in America. We're great at growing things. We're great at manufacturing. We're great at high-tech. Our policy ought not to be to wall ourselves from off—from the rest of the world. Our policy is to be optimistic and confident and demand that other countries open up their markets just like we have done for theirs, and we can compete with anybody.

This is the way to make sure that our economy is strong and people can find work. It starts with a philosophy: The role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment where the entrepreneur—the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, where small businesses can grow to be big businesses. The role of Government is to think out in the future. It is important that we reelect this administration because we're pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business, and pro-worker in America.

Finally, let me talk about a better America. It's important to understand—I think it's important for a President to understand where the true strength of America lies. If you're the President, you've got to understand the strengths of the country. And the strength of this country is not our military, although I intend to keep it strong. And for those of you who have got a loved one in the military, you tell them the Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of their service to our country.

The strength of the country is—"a" strength of the country but not "the" strength of the country is the fact that we're a wealthy nation, and that's good. The strength of the country is the hearts and souls of the American people. That's the strength of this country, when you think about it.

It's important to have a President who understands that if we're to have a hopeful future, it's important to understand the strength of America, because the job of the President is to rally that spirit, is to call people to serve their Nation by loving their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Government is not a loving organization. Government is—to me, Government is law and justice. Love comes from hearts and souls. Love oftentimes is inspired from above. Love is an essential part of helping solve some of the problems that seem impossible to solve. Amidst our plenty, there is loneliness and hunger and people lacking shelter. But those problems can be solved by rallying the armies of compassion, by encouraging people to serve their Nation by loving their neighbor.

Scott Dietsch is with us today. Where are you, Scott? Scott is a Big Brother in the Toledo area. See, he's taking time out of his life to mentor a child. His "little brother" Lance isn't here. He doesn't know his dad. Lance doesn't know his dad. Lance has got—now, however, has been surrounded by love because of Scott. Lance has had something happen in his life that's so incredibly positive and hopeful and uplifting because Scott has stepped up and said, "I want to be soldier in the army of compassion." Scott is taking time out of his life. Here's what he says: "It helps fulfill me,"—Scott's words—"It helps fulfill me to know I'm doing something for the better good. If I can change the route of one kid, at least I'll have done something."

That's the spirit of a compassionate, better America. You see, together we change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. That's why I think it's so important for the Government to encourage community-based and faith-based programs to flourish, to encourage their creation, to say to the social entrepreneurs of America, we welcome your works of kindness and compassion. We will not discriminate against people of faith. We will stand side by side with people of faith as they perform their duty as they see it, to make America a hopeful and compassionate place.

No, one of the key, important parts about this campaign for President is to make sure that we have a better tomorrow—we not only have a safer America, a stronger America, but a better America, that will enable each of our citizens to realize the God-given talents that they have been given. And it is possible to do so because this—America's strength, true strength, important strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It was an amazing day for me. I will remember—I remember clearly a guy in a hardhat as I was walking through the rubble, he said, "Don't let me down," and then people were shouting, "Whatever it takes." That's what they were shouting. And like we all did that day, I took it personally, what happened to America. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent to bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend America, whatever it takes.

I am here to ask for your help because I understand the task ahead for the country. I see clearly where we need to go. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to spread freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity and hope to every part of this country. That is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. May God bless you, and my God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. at a pancake breakfast at the Lucas County Recreation Center. In his remarks, he referred to Bernadette Restivo Noe, chairman, Lucas County Republican Party; Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Larry Kaczala, candidate for Congress in Ohio's 9th Congressional District; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session in Dayton, Ohio

May 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Mind if I take off my coat? I think I will. Listen, thank you all for coming. I'm thrilled to be here. I'm sorry I'm a little late. I got a little windy up in Toledo. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate you coming by for what we call a conversation. I'm going to talk a little bit. Some fellow citizens here are going to talk a little bit about their lives, in order to better illustrate our vision for an America that is safer and stronger and better. And if we've got some time, I'll answer some questions. Then I've got to get on the bus. [*Laughter*] The bus driver said, "If you talk too long, I'm pulling out of here." [*Laughter*]

I'm here to let you know that I want to serve as your President for 4 more years. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And I want to tell you why. I'm here to explain the reason why. We've got a job to do, a job to make sure this country is as safe as it can be, as strong as it should be, and as compassionate as it will be.

I'm also here to let you know that I need your help, that I need your help in convincing your neighbors to register to vote, to do their duty as Americans to vote. And don't be afraid to talk to people from the other party or people who may not be affiliated with any party, because our message is positive and optimistic and hopeful for every single American.

The good news is Laura W. Bush wants to serve for 4 more years as well. I regret she's not here. I talked to her on the plane earlier this morning. She said to send her very best. She is a—I'm a lucky guy. She's a great wife, a wonderful mother, and a fabulous First Lady of the United States. She's come to recognize what I know about the job, is that we can make a difference in people's lives, a positive difference. She is very much involved with encouraging teachers to teach, saying to people, "Look, if you're looking for a second career, say, if you served in the military and you're looking for something to do, get into the classroom and make a difference in some child's life." She understands the importance of reading. She was a public school librarian when I met her. She didn't like politics, and she didn't like politicians. [*Laughter*] Look where she is. [*Laughter*]

She can speak to freedom and the importance of freedom in societies like—she has the ability to speak to the women of Afghanistan like she did on a radio broadcast. Listen,

Laura understands what I know: It's a high privilege to serve the people of this country, and it's a fantastic opportunity to make the country as best as it can possibly be. She sends her best. She is—look, the best reason to put me back in there is so she's got 4 more years. [*Laughter*]

When you're out talking to your neighbors, remind them that I have put together a really good team to serve the country, people from all walks of life, men and women in positions of high responsibility, people from different backgrounds, people who are honorable citizens who have come to serve not their self-interest but to serve our country.

I got a great Vice President I'm running with in Dick Cheney. I remember being at a rally with my mother—Mother is still, you'll be happy to hear, a little feisty and outspoken at times. [*Laughter*] I said, "Dick Cheney is the finest Vice President our country has ever had." [*Laughter*] You can imagine what Mother said. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Congressman Dave Hobson for being here today. Where are you, Big Dave? Thank you, sir. Glad you're here—a fine Member of the House, a strong ally, and a good man. Appreciate you coming, Dave. I want to thank Congressman Mike Turner. I see you, Mike. I'm proud you're here, Mike.

I know Jennette Bradley is with us, and Joe Deters, members of the State—there they go. Good to see you all. Thanks for coming, Governor and Joe. Majority Whip Jeff Jacobson and State Rep Jon Husted, where are you both? Oh, there they go. Thought you'd get a better seat than that. [*Laughter*] Sign up a few more volunteers. [*Laughter*]

Listen, I want to thank Bob Bennett, the Ohio party chairman. I want to thank all the grassroots activists that are here. I need your help. I'm going to say it again. I'm here really to say, let's get after it. I want to win. I want to do everything I can to make sure this country is as safe as it can possibly be, and that's my most solemn duty. It was a duty that came home loud and clear on September the 11th, 2001. My job is to rally our Government to protect Americans from harm.

And we're working hard to do so. We changed the whole attitude in Washington about sharing intelligence between agencies, buttoning up the country as best as we possibly can. I think they're doing a darn good job at the airports. I know it's inconvenient, but it's all part of doing our duty to make this country secure. We have to be correct 100 percent of the time in order to protect America. The enemy has got to be right once, which really says that the best way to secure the homeland is to chase these killers down, one at a time, and bring them to justice.

I've got a plan to win the war on terror. We're making progress. We're not in this battle alone. First, just understand the nature of the war. Some say, "Well, this is just a matter of law enforcement and intelligence." No, that's not what it is. It's an issue that requires all our assets. It's an issue that requires the nature of the enemy if we're going to be able to solve the problem. These are coldblooded killers. They could care less about innocence or guilt. They have no conscience. There's no need to negotiate with them. You can't convince them of the error of their ways. This country must be strong and resolute, and we must never falter in the face of this enemy if we expect to secure the homeland.

It is essential that America lead through strength on this issue, lead by using all the assets we have at our disposal, not just some. It is important that when an American President speaks, he means what he says. It's important for the President to be clear in his language and resolute in the intention. That's when I said that—for example, when I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist"—once you say that, you better be willing to act on it. We were willing to act on it, and now the Taliban is no longer in power in Afghanistan.

Part of the war on terror is chasing Al Qaida down, and about two-thirds of their known leaders have been brought to justice, which is positive. The rest of them know we're breathing down their neck. Part of the war is to make sure there's no safe haven. And so, by removing the Taliban out of Afghanistan and introducing democracy into this country, Al Qaida lost safe haven.

But something else happened that's incredibly important for particularly the young to understand. The Taliban were incredibly

barbaric people. They were so backward that many young girls never got to go to school. That's hard to envision, isn't it, for an American to say, "Gosh, what is it like to live in a country where young girls are denied an education?" But that's the way they were. So not only did we deny safe haven, not only did we do what we said we're going to do, but now young girls have a chance to succeed in Afghanistan, thanks to the United States of America and our friends and allies. We're liberators. We care deeply about human freedom and the human condition.

The President must always remember the lessons learned from September the 11th. And here's the lesson learned for this country, that when we see a threat, we cannot let it gather, that if we see a threat to our security, we can no longer hope it goes away. We can no longer say, "Gosh, maybe the tyrant will change his mind." We don't have that luxury anymore. September the 11th taught us that we must deal with threats before they fully materialize.

I saw a threat in Iraq and—by looking at the intelligence. Congress, by the way, looked at the same intelligence, the same intelligence I looked at. They saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The threat we saw was based upon not only the intelligence but based upon the prior behavior of Mr. Saddam Hussein, a person who clearly hated America. He's a person that had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people and against people in his neighborhood. He's a person that had terrorist ties. After all, he's the person that paid suiciders money to blow up innocent lives in the Middle East. He was a tyrant to his own people.

No, we saw a threat, and the United Nations Security Council, if you remember, said, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the U.N. Security Council said, with America's vote. When America says something, it better mean it. And so when we said, "Disarm," to Saddam Hussein, we meant it. He chose defiance once again. He refused to comply with the demands of the free world. Given his history, given the fact that he was a madman, I was faced with the choice of whether to take his word or defend America. I will defend America every time.

First of all, if any of you have a loved one in the military, I want to thank you for your patience and your understanding. And I want to thank them for their sacrifice and service.

The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power, and so are the Iraqi people. They long to be free. They want to be free. Moms and dads in Iraq want to raise their children in a peaceful world. They want their children, just like we want our children, to grow up and realize dreams and aspirations. That's what they want. There's a few people there who are trying to stop the advance of freedom, and that's what we're facing.

It's tough work. It's been a hard couple of months for the American people. But I want you to know what I've told family members of—who have lost a loved one: Your son or daughter sacrificed for something incredibly important, which is freedom and peace. A free society in Iraq will lead to a more peaceful world. Not only have we removed a threat to America, but we now have a chance to spread freedom into a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies are hopeful societies. The long-term interest of this country, the long-term interest of the world revolve around whether or not we have the courage and the resolve and the determination to spread freedom in the Middle East, starting in Iraq. We have that resolve.

We have a plan. We have a plan to make Iraq more secure. Our troops will get what they need to do their job. Our troops will receive the help. And we have a plan to turn over sovereignty to the Iraqi—to an Iraqi entity. That's what we said we're going to do. When America speaks, it's got to mean what it says. Everybody is watching us—everybody is watching.

I love to tell the story about a dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. Maybe this will help put this in perspective. Prime Minister Koizumi is the Prime Minister of Japan. And we were having dinner in Tokyo, and we were talking about how we can work together to make the world more peaceful, starting with how to make sure that the Korean Peninsula is peaceful by keeping pressure on Kim Chong-il not to develop a nuclear weapon. See, the mutual goal is not to—is to keep

the Korean Peninsula nuclear-weapons-free. That's important. You can imagine. Kim Chong-il is a tyrant. He's a danger. Here I was talking to the Prime Minister of a country that was at war with the United States, had attacked our country, and it dawned on me that if we had gotten it wrong after World War II, I might not have been having this conversation about how to keep the peace. Also during the conversation, I realized that when we get it right in Iraq—and we will—when Iraq is free, someday an American President will be having the discussion with the duly elected official of Iraq about how to work together to bring peace in a troubled region of the world.

What we're doing is historic in nature. We have a chance to change the world for the better. We have a chance to spread freedom in parts of the world that are desperate for freedom. And as a result, America will have short-term security and long-term security.

Let me tell you something about freedom. It's a cornerstone of our foreign policy. One of the reasons I believe I need to be your President for 4 more years is because I understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world, and we have an obligation—[*applause*]. Thank you all.

A stronger America is also important for our future. I have a vision, a clear vision, as to how to keep our country strong. It starts with making sure the economy is strong, and I've got to tell you, I'm one optimistic fellow about our economy. And the reason why is I know what we have overcome. We've overcome a lot.

Think about what this country has been through in the last 3 years. We've been through a recession that started in early 2001. That means we were going backwards. It's hard to be a worker in an industry that has been beset by recession. It's hard to be a small-business owner if you're worried about the future. It was a negative period of time.

We started overcoming that, and the enemy hit us, and that hurt our economy too. It not only changed how we've got to view the world; it hurt our economy. It just did.

And then we started coming out of that, and we realized there were some citizens in our country who forgot what it meant to be responsible citizens. In other words, they didn't tell the truth. We had some corporate wrongdoers. We had a corporate scandal that shook our confidence. When you can't believe the numbers you're reading, if you're an investor or a worker, an employee, or an officer, it shakes your confidence about the American system. We dealt with it. We passed tough laws and made it clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

As well the march to war in Iraq affected capital markets and affected the optimism of the country. Imagine seeing on your TV screens the words "March to War." "America is marching to war." And if you're a planner or a small-business owner or somebody looking for work, it's a pretty negative environment in which to be making decisions. No, marching to war is not a positive thought. We're now marching to peace, and yet, we've overcome all those obstacles in a short period of time.

This economy of ours today is strong, and it's getting stronger. And the question is, how do we keep it strong as we go into the next decade. I say it's strong—first quarter growth was 4.2 percent. That's strong. That's good. Well, I say it's strong—we increased jobs nationwide by 308,000 in the month of March. New jobs here in Ohio are increasing in the month of March. I say it's strong—today there's a report out that showed that factory orders is up by 4.3 percent, the largest order increase in 2 years. In other words, there's indication after indication—it's strong. More people—the homeownership rate is the highest it's ever been in our Nation's history. That's good. We want more people owning something. This administration understands that if you own something, if you own your business, if you own your home, you're going to have a vital interest in the future of this country.

No, the indications are good. There are still people who hurt, and I understand that. There are people in parts of Ohio who haven't felt the recovery yet, but we're getting better. And we've got to make sure we have progrowth policies. I'm running because I want to make sure the progrowth agenda doesn't get disrupted.

What do you mean by that? Well, I believe strongly that one of the reasons why this economy is as strong as it is, is because we cut taxes, because the more people—we're going to hear from some couples in a minute about what—a couple—about what it meant to cut taxes. But we cut taxes. Let me tell you, when you have more money in your pocket, it generally increases demand for a good or a service. And when demand goes up, somebody is going to meet that good or a service, which means somebody is more likely to have a job or to find work. That's what that means. It was an important part—I like to tell people that this economic growth we're seeing is the result of tax relief—partially because of tax relief, and it shows that the American people are spending their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Some in Washington don't like that rhetoric. They think the Federal Government can spend it better than you can. That's just a difference of opinion. You better be careful in a campaign if somebody starts promising spending. Heck, we've got 6 months to go, and the fellow I'm running against is already over a trillion dollars in new programs. We're counting them up. He says he's going to pay for it by tax on the rich. You can't tax the rich enough to pay for all his promises. So guess who's going to pay? You're going to pay. And we're not going to let him do that, though. That would be terrible for the economy. The American people don't need a tax increase.

The question is, who has got the vision to make sure this country is the strongest economic nation in the world? I'm going to argue I do. See, the way to make sure we're strong and people can find work is to make sure this is the best place to do business in the world; this is the best place for people to risk capital; this is the best place for people to realize their dreams by starting their own business. That's what this campaign is about in the future—means we better get tort reform, better make sure that we do not have frivolous or junk lawsuits that make it difficult for people to be able to make a living.

And that includes medical liability reform. In order to make sure that we can grow our economy, in order to make sure people are able to feel comfortable about expanding their job base, we've got to do something about the cost of health care. Frivolous and junk lawsuits run up the cost of health care. They make health care more—less affordable and less accessible. The Congress needs to act. You need a President who is willing to push for medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

We need to continue to promote health savings accounts, which make sure that customers and docs have got the—patients and docs have got the proper relationship. We want the patient-doctor relationship to be the center of decisionmaking in health care, not Federal bureaucracy. We want to promote association health care plans to make sure small businesses are able to better afford health care.

Listen, the vision has got to be to make sure this is a good place to do business and that the ingredients are available for the entrepreneurial spirit to be strong. That's why we need an energy plan. We don't have an energy plan. It's stuck in the United States Congress.

We need a plan that promotes alternative sources of energy. Look, I'd love to be the President someday to be able to say, "The corn crop is good. Therefore, we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." I'd like to be able to grow energy, but it's going to take a while to get the research and development to kick in.

We need alternative sources of energy. We need to promote clean coal technology. We need to use the resources we've got. We ought to be exploring for more natural gas at home. We ought to be using our technology to encourage the spread of safe nuclear power. We ought to be on all fronts, making sure we—but my point is this—my point is this: We can encourage conservation; we can encourage reliable supplies of energy; and we must do so to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. If we expect to be competitive, we've got to have an energy plan.

Two other things I want to talk about right quick. One is, there's a lot of talk about trade. I'm going to tell you something: I need to be President to reject economic isolationism from taking hold in America. We should not

isolate ourselves from the world. That would be bad for workers. It would be bad for long-term economic growth.

Presidents before me have made the decision to open up our markets so consumers benefit from trade. You see, if you're a consumer here in America and you've got different options from which to choose, you're generally going to get better price and better quality. That's the way the economy works. But what hasn't happened is, foreign markets haven't opened up like ours have.

The message I give to the American people is, in order for us to grow our job base and to stay competitive and stay strong, is for us not to fear competition but to welcome it, so long as there's a level playing field. We can compete with anybody. Our workers are productive. Our farmers and ranchers are great. Our high-tech industry is imaginative and strong. The policy of Government ought to be to open up new markets for American entrepreneurs and businesspeople and farmers and ranchers. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

Government must put good policy in place that encourages the spread of innovative technology. My dream is for everybody in America to have broadband technology in their home by the year 2007. This is—broadband technology, if done right, is going to revolutionize education and health care. It will make this society more entrepreneurial, make the people of America more productive. It's a great way—a great opportunity. We had a good break. The Senate passed a moratorium on access taxes to broadband. My view is there ought to be not any taxes on broadband. If you want it to spread across the country, don't tax it. Plus we've got to get rid of regulatory hurdles so that it spreads around. Innovative society—an innovative society is one that's necessary for us to compete, but there are problems with an innovative society. We're going to talk a little bit about the opportunities and the challenges that an innovative society provides.

Let me put it to you this way: Technology races through our economy, and it makes us more competitive. There are new ideas, but workers lag. Some industries are old. Some new industries spring up. But the transition from the old industry to the new industry is a difficult transition for many of our workers. We will not be a productive leader in the world if we don't get our education systems right.

On the one hand, we've got to make sure our youngsters learn to read and write and add and subtract early, before it is too late. And that's why the No Child Left Behind Act that I had the honor of signing is a really good start. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're shutting down this business of simply shuffling kids through the system. We're making sure they learn to read early, before it's too late, and they're getting help if they need help. We're going to raise the bar. We're going to make sure every child from every background gets as good an education as possible.

But you've got to also understand there are workers in this world who are working for companies that—where the job base is dwindling. And yet, there are also jobs in the neighborhood, and we need to use the community college system in a wise way to make sure that we train people for the jobs of the 21st century. We'll talk about this in a minute. But what I'm telling you about—a vision that understands America's role in the world is one that says, "Education is the cornerstone—practical education to make sure the workers get the training they need to be productive workers as our economy transition to the 21st-century economy."

Finally, let me tell you about how to make America a better place. The President has got to understand the proper role between Government and compassion—between—the proper role between Government and the strength of the country. The strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American citizens. That's our strength.

The Government is not a loving organization. I'm sure there's loving people in Government. I'm one. [*Laughter*] But Government, itself, is not loving. Government is law and justice. Love comes when somebody—a soul says, "What can I do to make my community a better place? What can I do to mentor a child? What can I do to love my neighbor just like I'd like to be loved myself?" I need to be President for 4 more years to rally that spirit, to call upon that great strength

of America so our society changes, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

Let me talk a little bit about some of the people I've had the honor of meeting. I met the Berkeys, Kim and Becky. They're with us today. Kim is a cargo handler at Menlo Forwarding. Is that right?

Kim Berkey. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. And Becky is with him, his wife. They—they're a tax—I call them a tax family. The reason why is because they saved money, $1,900, from the tax cut. That's $1,900 of their own money they get to keep, not like the Government—and it's 1,900 this year too.

See, we raised the child credit to $1,000, which helped people raise families. It's an important part of the tax relief. We reduced the marriage penalty. We got a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. It seems to me it sends the wrong signal. We ought to be encouraging marriage and family, not penalizing marriage.

They saved $1,900. It's a lot of money to them—at least that's what they told me. If Congress doesn't act, there's going to be a tax increase on these folks. It doesn't make any sense, does it, to be raising taxes on them at this point when the economy begins to grow. And $1,900, it gives them more money to pay down credit. It gives them more money to take care of their family.

Is that right? What did you do with all that money?

Mr. Berkey. Well, mostly we used it just to pay off some bills, much like most of our friends, because raising a family is very expensive nowadays. I brought my three children, and as you can see, just feeding them guys took most of that $800. [*Laughter*]

The President. Good-looking family you got there. Thanks for coming.

If they don't move—Congress doesn't move, they're going to have an increase of about $900 taxes. I don't know what that would do to you. I'm not a lawyer, but that's a leading question, isn't it? [*Laughter*] Go ahead. Speak up, Mom.

Becky Berkey. Any kind of an increase is just going to make things tighter. You know, I like to have the money here.

The President. See, we've got money in Washington. We just have to set our priorities. I've laid out a plan to cut this deficit in half in 5 years, but Congress is going to have to be careful about how they spend your money. It's a plan that prioritizes the military, prioritizes defending the homeland, but it's a plan that says to Congress, you know, "Be wise about using the people's money." I don't have to worry about these two Congressmen. They're wise about the money.

But we don't need to be taking money out of these people's pockets, see? We don't need a bunch of promisers in Washington, DC, who say, "Well, I better fulfill my promise by taxing these good folks." It's not only bad for them; it's bad for the overall economy. Taking $900 out of their pocket affects the economy. And we're beginning to grow, and it requires—what this Nation needs is a person who understands how economies grow. Governments don't make economies grow. People make economies grow, and these people need to get their money.

Thank you all for coming.

When you're talking to your friends and neighbors about the tax rhetoric, remind them that an essential part of a vibrant economy is the small-business sector. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small-business owners in America. That's pretty good, isn't it? So if you're worried about job creation in Ohio, you better stay focused on small-business owners.

And we've got an owner with us. Dave Dysinger owns his own business. Isn't that exciting to hear, "I own"—can you imagine saying, "I own my own business?" It's exciting words for the entrepreneur, "I own my business—it's my business." He owns his. And I just want to—you've just got to tell your neighbors the truth about the tax relief. When you cut rates, overall rates for everybody, you're really affecting small business, because most small businesses are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S corporations. So when you hear people say, "I'm going to tax the rich," really what they're saying—they may try to tax the rich. The rich generally have good accountants so they don't get taxed much, and the small businesses will take the brunt of the tax-the-rich scheme. And that hurts our economy.

Dave, tell us about your business.

[*Dave Dysinger, president, Dysinger, Inc., Dayton, OH, made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Mr. Dysinger. We are back in a growth cycle. We're up to 21 employees now. We expect to hire 10 more and 20 next year.

The President. There you go.

Mr. Dysinger. So we're moving.

The President. We care about outsourcing in America. We want people working here, but the wrong policy would have been, "Let's go through economic isolationist policy. Let's wall us off from the world." Instead, the right policy was to stimulate growth at home.

See, he's helping make my point. My point is, let us be confident about ourselves. Let's put the right policies in place that encourage growth at home. Here's a fellow that—his business dropped, and it's now on the upswing. Did you notice he said he's going to hire 10 people this year? There's a lot of Daves in America. There's a lot of small businesses who are feeling the way he's feeling. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by the small-business sector of the economy, and you just heard an entrepreneur say 10 this year, 15 next year? Twenty next year?

Mr. Dysinger. Twenty next year.

The President. Do I hear 25?

Mr. Dysinger. I hope.

The President. Not yet. I want Dave to explain his investment strategy. Are you going to make any investments?

Mr. Dysinger. Yes, to make room for the people, we're going to have to add facility, so we expect to double our facility size this year. And we need to buy—we're going to buy some used machinery and some new machinery. We expect to spend probably $2 million over the next 12 months.

The President. Right. Let me tell you about the connection between what he just said—and by the way, part of his decisionmaking was because he's optimistic about expanding. I suspect part of his decisionmaking had to do with the bonus depreciation you got in the tax bill. In other words, there was an incentive to encourage people to invest.

Mr. Dysinger. That's right.

The President. Yes, see. That's a leading question. I already knew the answer. But let me—[*laughter*]—but the reason I bring that up is that when you hear Dave say he's going to buy some equipment or invest, somebody has got to make the equipment. In other words, he said, "I want to—I'm increasing demand for equipment." And somebody is going to respond to his demand, and when they make the equipment, somebody has got to be employed to do so. And if the person making the equipment has got more orders than the previous year, it may mean that he is expanding as well.

So here is Dave saying, "I'm expanding. I need to invest." The person who he is buying from also may be now in a position to—and that's how the economy works. It starts with influencing the decision—in this case, of a small-business entrepreneur—by good tax policy, and I think it happens to be good economic policy to be optimistic and confident about our future. And it's his decision, not the Government's decision. It's his decision that stimulates further economic growth and vitality.

I want to thank you for being an entrepreneur. I wish you all the best in your business.

Mr. Dysinger. I'd like to thank you also. The fact is, I'm proud and grateful to be an American. And I am very thankful for the leadership you bring to us here in these hard times.

The President. Thank you, sir. [*Applause*] Thank you all. Thank you all. Let me—thanks. Thanks a lot, Dave. I'm glad I invited you. [*Laughter*]

I mentioned the role of community colleges. We've got a plan called the Jobs for the 21st Century, and an integral part of that is to make sure the Workforce Investment Act actually gets money to people who are looking for work. And a key component of a job strategy has got to be to rely upon your asset base. And we've got a great asset base at the community colleges. Community colleges are flexible. They're affordable. They're available. And the thing I love about community colleges, when they're run right, they're able to match employer demand with employees that want to work. In other words, they're able to train somebody for jobs which actually exist. And part of our focus is to empower community colleges to enter collaborative efforts with local employers.

If you happen to be on the chamber of commerce, by the way, and you've got a community college around, use it to attract industry. People want to make sure they've got trained workers. Use your community colleges.

We've got Steve Johnson with us. You probably think I'm going to pick him because he got his Ph.D. from the University of Texas. No, that's not why we got him. We got him because he's running Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio.

My fellow Texan—no—tell us about your community college.

[*Steven Lee Johnson, president, Sinclair Community College, made brief remarks.*]

The President. What he's telling you is, is that—notice he mentioned Dave's name. He is available to design a curriculum that helps Dave and, at the same time, helps the workers.

One of the interesting areas—one of the things I find around the country is that there's great demand in the health care field in America today. In other words, old jobs are being replaced by new jobs.

Is that the case here or not?

Dr. Johnson. That's the case. In fact, a lot of the support that Sinclair has received over the years from Federal grants, National Science Foundation, Department of Labor grants, Department of Education grants, has allowed us to revamp and overhaul our curriculum, has allowed us to put in technology training programs that are for today and for tomorrow.

The President. Yes. The Federal Government helps. It sets priorities. You know, there's displaced workers—money to help displaced workers. If a community gets hit hard by a layoff, there's money available to help the community colleges train people for jobs which exist. Part of the problem we have in America is there are jobs that are available, and people just aren't trained to meet them.

The other interesting thing about our country and the economy today and where the community colleges provide a very important role is that we're becoming a more productive society. In other words, there's the premium on being a productive worker, which requires different kinds of skill sets than you had in the past. In other words, envision going from the shovel to the backhoe. You had to learn how to drive the backhoe, and when you did, you were incredibly more productive than you were with a shovel. It's that same equivalent that's taking place throughout our economy right now. We're in a time of transition, and community colleges help workers become more productive.

But productivity increases for a worker means higher pay. The more productive a society you are, the more your standard of living goes up. And so one of the things that we're going to talk about here in a minute is how a particular individual can become more productive through going to the community college and then enhance her standard of living.

Have you got anything else you want to offer, Steve?

Dr. Johnson. Just one other thing, President Bush——

The President. I thought you had something on the tip of your tongue.

Dr. Johnson. I just have one thing. You know how we are. I just want to say that you are very—we really appreciate your support of community colleges and of Sinclair Community College. And you are very complimentary, and you do know—I want to point out that it's the community leaders in this room that built Sinclair Community College, maintain Sinclair Community College. And that's the story across America, local leaders building colleges to serve the needs of today and tomorrow.

The President. Yes, and that's the way it should be, by the way. The Federal Government can help on targeted assistance. We can help with collaborative efforts, but like public schools, community colleges need to be run by the local folks. You don't want to Federalize education.

Thank you.

Ready? Okay, I want you to hear, I think, an amazing story. Nancy Scott is with us. Nancy, thank you for coming. Mother of three—I think she's got the toughest job in America. She's a single mother of three. That's hard work. Nancy, tell us what you did, where you went to school, and what you're doing, please.

[*Nancy Scott made brief remarks.*]

The President. Okay, let me stop you. I know you're just getting wound up, and there's nothing worse than—[*laughter*]. She goes back to school. First of all, Government can't make Nancy Scott go back to school. She's got to want to succeed, herself. She has a great spirit.

There's help available. Pell grants are important. I'm a big supporter of Pell grants. It makes sense to help people go back to school.

And the third thing that you just heard her say is her income doubled. In other words, she became a more productive worker. She gained new skills, skills that are more applicable to the 21st-century jobs that are now being created, and her income doubled. People have got to understand that helping a worker become more productive not only helps fill jobs but, more importantly, helps the worker and her family, in this case, to double her income.

Go ahead.

Ms. Scott. I would just like to add that, other than that, my family and friends here and in New York are praying for you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. I appreciate you saying that.

Ms. Scott. And we stand behind you.

The President. Thanks a lot. I'm honored. Thank you for coming. I appreciate you.

That's—isn't that a fabulous story? See, that's the story of the 21st century. We need to continue stories like this as we—as our economy changes. There are a lot of people like Nancy who want to meet their obligations and their responsibilities and want to be helped so they can become productive. I love the story of Nancy Scott. I meet people like that all the time. The community college is an essential part of making sure that we're competitive in the future by enabling our workers, who are the best in the world, to have the skills necessary to compete. That's what we're talking about.

Let me—I'm fixing to go to—fixing to get on the bus. I do want to answer some questions before I get out of here. Here's your chance.

Yes, ma'am.

Support for Troops in Iraq

Q. Yes—my husband is serving in Iraq——

The President. Your husband is in Iraq now?

Q. Right.

The President. Thank you. What's he doing?

Q. He's with the civil affairs, and he supports you 100 percent for being there. And I support you, and his family supports you for being there. My question is, is there any plans of getting out the personnel vehicles from the Vietnam era to help with the protection from the—until the Humvees get——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——for their—protection for the soldiers?

The President. Right. The plan is to continue to upgrade the Humvees and to bring in more Strykers. Look, I want you to know—and, first of all, thank your husband. But I want our troops to have the very best. This—you hear—this is politics. It's kind of a political season, so you hear things that—people say things like we don't want our soldiers to have the best. But we put an $87 billion supplemental out there. A big chunk of that money was to make sure we upgraded the equipment our soldiers were getting to make them safe. That's a lot of money. It takes a while to get the Kevlar vests, the latest Kevlar vests manufactured. We're distributing it. I supported the 67 billion for the troops—87 billion overall.

I want to remind you what my opponent said about that. [*Laughter*] He said he voted for the 87 billion, right before he voted against it. [*Laughter*] Look, we just need strong support for our troops. And I have a solemn duty to say to you as clearly as I can, we will do the very best we possibly can to make your loved one safe. That's what we owe the family members, and that's what we owe the troops.

Yes, sir.

Education

Q. Mr. President, I consider it a great honor to be here today to be with you. I am a retired educator, and as you know, many of the people in my profession profess to be

very opposed to the things that the Republicans are proposing. And I made a comment here earlier today to some friends that if the educators will speak the truth, the real truth, we can teach every child and not leave them behind. But it takes not just money. It takes the backing of the family. It takes backing of the school. It takes backing of everyone to make that child want to learn, and it's not dollars that's going to pull him out, the way the NEA says it is.

So as the retired principal of West Carrollton Junior High School, I support your plan 100 percent, and I know many, many educators that support it as well. They're not all on the side of the NEA.

The President. Well, I appreciate you. Thanks for being in education. Thank you.

Let me say something. Look, the key is that we use curriculum that works. The key is that we encourage our teachers. The key is we don't federalize public schools. The key is, where we find failure, we address it. In order to address failure, you've got to figure it out in the first place. That's why measuring is so important.

There was a big battle over measuring when I was Governor of Texas. There's a battle over measuring when it comes to Federal dollars. People don't want to measure—some people don't. How do you know, if you don't measure? How can you tell whether a child is just being shuffled through the system, unless you're willing to say, "See if you can read?" Early, by the way—you've got to test early to determine whether or not a child has got the skills necessary to become a productive citizen, which is reading. And if you find there's a deficiency, we've got money in the budget to correct it early, before it's too late.

The whole cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind Act is this great sense of possibility for every child. If you do not believe every child can learn to read and write, then you say it's okay not to measure. If you believe every child can learn to read and write, you want to measure to determine if they can. And if so, you reward the schools that are meeting expectations, and if not, you change. [*Applause*] I appreciate that.

Request for Autograph

Q. Mr. President, would you please sign this? [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. In a minute. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Steel Prices

Q. The question is, due to your administration, our business has turned around phenomenally. The last 2 months have been record months, but where we're taking a hit at is the steel industry. The prices are skyrocketing.

The President. Yes. Well, I understand. And the reason why is because the world is recovering. You see, when demand—worldwide demand was depressed for steel because there was slowness in the world, there was an oversupply. And what's happened is, is that demand has outstripped supply because countries like China are now demanding more steel. They're beginning to grow. The whole world is beginning to grow. The United States is beginning to grow.

And I understand the pressures. Obviously, in a market-oriented world, which I believe the world should be, there will be price-driven expansion. In other words, there will be more steel producers or more steel coming on to meet the increased demand. And I understand what you're going through, but just remember, it wasn't all that long ago that the price of steel was at the bottom end of the pricing structure. And we're going through a cycle now because the world is expanding. Our exports are up, by the way. We want the world to expand. We want there to be prosperity around the world. It makes—it gives us a better chance to sell what we make into other markets.

And so I understand where you're coming from. And I guess what I'm telling you is there's cyclicality in the economy, particularly when it comes to steel pricing.

Yes? Go ahead and bring that plate over here. I can listen and sign at the same time.

Yes, ma'am.

The Presidency

Q. My name is Erica Keene. I'm 8 years old. And what's the funnest thing to be—about being President? [*Laughter*]

The President. The funnest thing is this: Making decisions that make the world a better place. I've got to make a lot of decisions—some of them you'll see, and some of them you don't see—which means that in order to make good decisions, you better know what you believe; you better stand on principle.

Secondly, in order to make good decisions, I've got to listen to smart people. I like to be around smart, intelligent, capable people. I like to walk into a room full of people like Condi Rice or Dick Cheney or Don Rumsfeld or Colin Powell.

I like to tell people the Oval Office is a powerful place. People will stand outside the Oval Office, and they say, "I can't wait to get in there and tell him what for." And then they open the door, and they walk in this majestic shrine to democracy, and they're overwhelmed by the atmosphere. And they say, "Man, you're looking beautiful, Mr. President"—[*laughter*]—which means you better have people around you who tell you the truth. [*Laughter*]

A decisionmaker must be willing to listen, must be willing to count on others to give good, solid advice. As you go out and gather the vote, remind people I've put together a really fantastic team of citizens. And they're good and honest folks who are smart and capable.

No, the best thing about this job is making decisions that I think will influence the world and the country in positive ways.

Let me talk to you real quick about history. I don't think a President, if he does big things, will be around to see the history of his administration. Oh, yes, there will be the subjective history. There will be the political history. There will be the short-term history about an administration. But you won't be able to see the big things that have changed, the momentum of freedom in parts of the world that's desperate for freedom or a cultural change in the country, to see the ultimate effects of a cultural change from one that—a culture that said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

So the idea—the best part of this job is to set in motion big changes of history. It's unbelievably exciting to be in a position to do that. That's why I want to be the President for 4 more years. I see clearly where I want to lead the country. I see the obligations we have as a great nation. We have an obligation, where we see tyranny and slavery, to act. I don't mean militarily. I mean using our influence to free people. We have the obligation to free people from tyranny, and we have the obligation to free people from disease. One of the things this country has done that I'm incredibly proud of is we're leading the fight against HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa, for example. It is an incredibly important mission for this great and compassionate country.

Yes. You've written this question down. That's dangerous.

Q. Yes, but that's because I'm a little nervous.

The President. Okay, well, don't worry. It's just the President and a huge press corps. [*Laughter*]

Q. First of all, I want to say I'm very honored to be here with you today. I brought my wife and my daughter with me.

The President. Good. How old is the daughter? I'll just try—I'm trying to get you relaxed.

Q. My daughter is 14. She's right here.

The President. Do not introduce a 14-year-old daughter. I keep telling you. [*Laughter*]

Q. My daughter—my wife, Debbie, is over here.

The President. Hi, Debbie. How are you? How is he doing so far? Okay, good.

President's Faith/2004 Election

Q. First of all, Mr. President, thank you. I want to thank you for being a man of faith. And as a fellow—[*applause*].

The President. Thank you. Okay. He may have a question back there. [*Laughter*]

Q. Wow. Anyhow, as a fellow man of faith, how has the faith, first, affected you as a man? How has your faith affected you as President? And further, how do you think faith will affect the outcome of the 2004 election? Thank you.

The President. Yes. That's a good question. First, let me make this abundantly clear to you: The job of the President is to promote a society in which people are free to worship as they see fit. A valuable and cherished tradition of America is that you can worship an Almighty if you want to, and you're just as patriotic if you choose not to, that if you choose to worship, you can worship any religion that you choose. My job is to make sure that that is a absolute part of the American society in future.

From an individual perspective, as a person, I rely upon faith to give me the strength necessary to do my job. One of the interesting parts of the job, something that I discovered as President, is the fact that a lot of people pray for me. That's a very humbling thought when you think about little old me. People pray for George W. and his family. I don't ask. People just do, and for that I'm grateful, incredibly grateful. I believe in prayer, and I appreciate the prayers of people.

I think the 2004 election will be determined by the American people's decision as to who best can lead the country. That's what I think will determine the 2004 election. I think it's the collective will of the people which make that determination. Some people of faith will participate. Some who don't necessarily agree with faith will participate. The question of the outcome of the race is who best can describe as clearly as possible a positive and hopeful and optimistic future for every single citizen of this country regardless of their political party, regardless of their background, regardless of their economic status. That's what I think will determine the outcome of this election.

Yes, little guy way up there. My favorite dog is Barney. [*Laughter*] That wasn't your question, okay. I think this is going to have to be the last question. I know, I'm sorry. Come on down the road to Lebanon. [*Laughter*]

The Presidency

Q. Mr. President, do you like your job? And is it difficult at times?

The President. Yes. I love my job, and that's why I want to do it for 4 more years. I believe that—a lot of jobs are tough, but that's what makes them worthwhile. My job is the kind of job that you better know who you are and where you're going in order to do it the right way. You can't kind of fumble around with your value system on the people's time. You've got to be rock solid in what you believe.

I tease and say I'm listening to my mother, as the President. Well, that's part of what it means to be rock solid in your values. You get raised a certain way, and that's just the way you are. And you show up, and you do your job. You tell people what you think, make the best decisions you can possibly make. You just can't worry about politics. I'm worried—I am in the political arena. I'm obviously anxious about this election; otherwise, I wouldn't be here asking for the vote. I'm anxious for it to get started. I like to campaign. I like to be with people. But I'm not going to change. I'm not going to change my principles. I'm not going to change my value system in order to win the vote.

I want to thank you all for coming. May God bless. Thank you all. Thanks for being here. Yes. Thanks, everybody. Glad you're here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. at the Hara Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley and State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters of Ohio; Ohio State Senator Jeff Jacobson; Ohio State Representative Jon Husted; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks in Lebanon, Ohio

May 4, 2004

Thank you all for coming. I'm proud to be the first sitting President to have visited here. I am—actually, I'm a standing President today. [*Laughter*]

I'll tell you why I'm here. I want to—I'm here to tell you I want to be your President for 4 more years. I see clearly where we need to go in order to make this country safer and stronger and better, and I need your help. I need you to find people to register to vote. I need you to turn out the vote. I need you to put up the signs. I need you to do your

duty as Americans and vote, and when you do, I'll be reelected, thanks to your help.

Rob told me 11 other Presidents have visited the Golden Lamb. None of them came on a bus like this. [*Laughter*] I don't think so, do you?

I really appreciate my friends here in Ohio. This is an important State. And it's the State that we're going to work hard to earn the confidence of the people from all walks of life. But it's going to require a good grassroots effort in order for us to get the message out. I want you to make sure you tell your friends and neighbors—it doesn't matter what their political party is—that our message and our vision is one that is positive and hopeful and optimistic for every single American. That's what we believe.

I regret that Laura is not here today. I know it. You drew the short straw. [*Laughter*] You know, I really got lucky when she said yes. She is a fabulous wife, a great mother, and she's doing a wonderful job as the First Lady of this country. I think she deserves 4 more years.

I want—as you get out and gather the vote, remind people that it's the President's job to surround himself with excellence, to put a good team together on behalf of the American people. I've assembled a great Cabinet and a great administration, people from all walks of life, people from different backgrounds, people who have come to Washington, DC, to serve our Nation and not their self-interest. We've had no finer Vice President of the United States than Dick Cheney. Mother heard me say that one time. She said, "Wait a minute, Buster."

No, I'm proud of my team. And I'm proud of working with the Members of Congress. You got a fine Congressman in Rob Portman. I didn't know he was an innkeeper. [*Laughter*] But he's a great guy, an honest fellow, a smart person, a person who cares deeply for the people of Ohio. I traveled today down from Dayton with Congressman Mike Turner, who's doing a fine job as well. I appreciate you coming, Congressman Turner.

I appreciate Lieutenant Governor Jennette Bradley, who is with us today, and State Treasurer Joe Deters. I want to thank the members of the statehouse who are here.

I appreciate the mayor came out today, Amy Brewer. Madam Mayor. She didn't ask for any advice, but I'm going to give her some. [*Laughter*] Fill the potholes, Mayor. [*Laughter*] And thank you for your service.

I want to thank my friend Jo Ann Davidson, who is my regional chairman, a former speaker of the house of Ohio.

I understand Anthony Munoz is here. Where is Anthony? Anthony, *como esta?* Good to see you again, buddy. Thank you for coming. What a class act he is. He's a person who understands that a responsible citizen is somebody who puts something back in the community in which they live. And I'm proud to call you friend, Anthony. Thank you for coming.

I want to thank all the people who care about your country and decided to participate in the political process. It's really important. It's important for citizens to understand we have a duty in democracy to participate. I hope you go out and gather people to the polls. You might suggest they vote for me when you do, and tell them I've got a reason. Look, I'm here asking for the vote. The reason I've come here is I want people to know I want to be your President. I take nothing for granted. I'm here to say, I need your help and want your help to lead this country for 4 more years.

I'm seeking the endorsement of the people. I'm running against the—and it's going to be a tough campaign, by the way. We're not going to take anything for granted, and neither should you. I'm running for a fellow who's got a lot of experience. He's been in Washington an awful long time—so long, he's taken about—both sides of just about every issue. [*Laughter*] That's called Washingtonitis.

And he's seeking the endorsements too. As you might remember, he claims to have picked up some important endorsements from foreign leaders. He just won't give us their names. Here's what he said about that one question. He said, "What I said is true." He said, "I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." That's what he said when one of the big-time reporters asked him about it. I've got a hunch this whole thing might be a case of mistaken

identity. [*Laughter*] Just because somebody has an accent or a nice suit or a good table in New York City, it doesn't make him a foreign leader. Whoever these mystery men are, they will not be deciding the election. I'm here to ask for the endorsement not of foreign leaders but of the American people.

And I've got a reason. I've got a job to make this country a safer country. My job is to do everything in our power to protect the American people from an enemy which is coldblooded, an enemy that has no conscience, an enemy which struck us on September the 11th. We have rallied together as a Nation. We're doing everything we can to protect our homeland. Our ports are more secure. The borders are better off. It's harder to get through an airport these days, I fully understand. After all, they're looking inside your shoes, but it's for a reason. It's to make sure that we do everything we can to protect the homeland. But the best way to protect America is to stay on the offensive and bring these killers to justice, one person at a time.

It's important for the President and future President to understand the nature of the war we face. This is more than a war that requires law enforcement and intelligence. That's what some people have said. That's the attitude we took after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. We served some legal papers, and some thought the matter was settled. But the enemy was still planning, and they were plotting, and they were training. After the carnage of September the 11th, you need to have a President who understands you can't win this war with legal papers. We've got to use every asset at our disposal.

The terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. And we're making good progress. We're chasing them down. We've got a lot of friends on the hunt. We're cutting off their money. We're sharing intelligence. We've got some fantastic military troops on the hunt for them. Two-thirds of known Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice, and the rest of them can feel us breathing down their neck.

You've got to have a President who understands the nature of the war. It's essential that we not show any weakness. We must be determined and strong and unrelenting in our search for those who would do harm to the American people. The war on terror is more than just chasing down Al Qaida. The war on terror is enforcing doctrine. It's essential that when an American President speaks, he speak clearly, and when he says something, means what he says.

When I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant what I said. When a President says something, it must be clear, and it must be meaningful. In order to keep the peace, there must be truth in the words of the President. The Taliban found out what I meant. Thanks to our troops and our coalition members, we routed the Taliban from power. And Afghanistan is no longer a training base for Al Qaida.

Part of the war on terror was making sure Al Qaida couldn't train there. Part of the war on terror is to spread freedom in places like Afghanistan. I want you to remember what life was like for little girls in Afghanistan before we arrived. The Taliban were so barbaric and so backwards, so corrupt in their vision, that young girls—many young girls never received an education. Thanks to the United States of America and our brave troops, thanks to our friends and our coalition, not only did we rout the Taliban and America is more safe, we routed out a Government. And now young girls have got hope and optimism for their future.

A President must understand the world the way it is. And after September the 11th, this country needs to have a President who understands that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it materializes. When a President sees a threat, he just can't hope it goes away. He just can't hope that somehow the—a tyrant will change his mind.

I saw a threat in Iraq.* I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. The Congress looked at the intelligence. Members of both political parties looked at that same intelligence and saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council, like me, remembered—we saw more than a threat. We remembered that Saddam Hussein had used weapons of mass

* White House correction.

destruction against his own people and against his neighborhood, that Saddam Hussein professed hatred for America, that he had terrorist ties, that he paid suiciders to kill innocent citizens in the Middle East. We remembered all that.

And so we went to the United Nations, and the United Nations agreed with America when, unanimously, the Security Council said, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." When America speaks, we must mean what we say. We said, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." Saddam Hussein, as he had for a decade, defied the demands of the free world. So I had a choice to make: Either trust the word of a madman, or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. Because we acted, torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, democracy is rising in the heart of the Middle East. Because we said something and did what we said, countries like Libya got the message and voluntarily disarmed. Because we acted, America is more secure, and the world is more peaceful.

There's hard work still to do, and like you, I mourn the loss of every life. And like you, I recognize how difficult the work in Iraq is. It's essential that we implement our strategy for the sake of long-term peace and freedom. You see, free societies are peaceful societies.

I also know that freedom is in the soul of every human being. Freedom isn't America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

The Iraqi people long to be free. The Iraqi people want to self-govern. But there are thugs and assassins who want to stop the march to freedom. That's what you're seeing on your television screens. You're seeing a few killers trying to halt the progress of freedom because they understand that freedom will be a major defeat in the cause against terror. Terrorists can't stand free societies. Terrorists understand the power of freedom just like Americans understand the power of freedom. This country will finish what we have begun. We will see that Iraq is free and self-governing and democratic. We will accomplish our mission. We will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

I'm running because I understand the historic opportunity we have. It's an historic moment to help change the world. I believe, as the strongest nation on the face of the Earth, we have a duty and an obligation to spread freedom, to resist tyranny, to help people from all walks of life realize their ambition. And I know that by fulfilling that duty, by using our strength and our influence, by spreading freedom, that we will leave behind a legacy of peace for our children and for our children's children. This is the course that history has put before us, the challenge that history has put before us. We welcome it. We do not shirk our duty. We welcome our duty.

There is a difference of opinion, when it comes to that duty, in foreign policy. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world but only if other countries do not object. I believe strongly in alliances. I believe strongly in working with other nations that share the same values we share, that understand the need for freedom and peace to be spread throughout the world. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I'm running because I have a vision for a stronger America that's based on a strong economy. I understand the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes. I understand the job of Government is to empower people to realize their dreams. You see, we have a difference of opinion in this race, the role of the Federal Government versus the role of the private individual.

We went through tough economic times. We've been through a recession and a war and a national emergency and corporate scandals. But I understood that in order to come out of these tough economic times, the best thing to do is not to increase the size and scope of the Federal Government, but the best thing to do is to let people keep more of their own money. In order to grow the economy, when people have more money, they demand—the cornerstone of our pro-growth economic policy is to trust the people of America with their own money.

We're not spending the Government's money in Washington, DC. It's your money, and when you have more money in your pocket, this economy will grow and expand.

I like to say that the numbers look good. First quarter economic growth was strong. Jobs are now being created in Ohio. They're being created nationwide. More people own their home than in a long period of time. Homeownership rate is the highest ever. More minorities are owning their own home. People are starting their own business. It is clear that the economic stimulus package we passed is working. It is clear that people are spending their money far wiser than the Federal Government would have.

And the fundamental question in this campaign is how do we make sure the economy continues to grow? How do we make sure America is the best place in the world to do business? How do we make sure we're the leader in the world? Let me give you some ideas.

First, we've got to make sure we're wise with the people's money. We've got to make sure that we don't run your taxes up. The worst time to raise taxes on the American people would be right now. I'm running against a fellow who's made over a trillion dollars of promises in this campaign, and we're only getting started. We've got 6 months to go, and he's already over a trillion. I can't imagine what it's going to be like next October. And the problem is, he said he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. That's code word. That's the way they talk in Washington. There's not enough money. You can't tax the rich enough to pay for his promises. Guess who he's going to tax? He's going to tax me and you. You're going to pay for this. He's either going to break his promises on these new spending increases, which I don't think he'll do, or he's going to tax the American people, which I will think he'll do.

This is a terrible time to raise taxes on the American people. You need to put me in office for 4 more years so your taxes won't go up.

We've got to make sure that we've got good trade policy in this country. You hear a lot of talk about ideas that would isolate us from the world. I think that would be a disaster. If we want to be competitive in the long run, we don't want to be isolated. We just want to have a chance to compete.

Presidents before me have opened up the United States for foreign goods because it's good for consumers. If you've got more goods coming in, it gives you more products from which to choose and helps you get a better price for something you want to buy. The problem is we haven't had other countries open up their markets like ours. In order for us to be competitive, in order for us to be—for people to be able to find work in the short term and the long term, you need you a President who will continue to open up foreign markets so we can compete. Just give us a chance to compete. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best farmers in the world. "Open up those markets," is what we're saying, "and give us a chance to compete, and this economy will continue to grow and expand."

If we want to compete in the long term, we need tort reform. There's too many frivolous and junk lawsuits that are making it hard for small businesses to expand and grow. We need medical liability reform in this country in order to control the cost of health care. We need health savings accounts and association health care plans. Look, we need to make sure the patient and the doctor are the center of the health care system in the world, not Federal bureaucracies.

If we want to be competitive and strong, if we want our people to be able to find work, you better get you a President who understands we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I've laid out a strong energy strategy that's stuck in the United States Senate. It's an energy policy that encourages alternative sources of energy. It's an energy policy that encourages conservation. But it's an energy policy that's realistic too. We need clean coal technology. We need clean nuclear power. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want this economy to grow.

Finally, if we want to be smart, if we want to be the leading country in the world when it comes to growth so people can work, we got to be better—we've got to be smarter about how we educate our people. I mean, this No Child Left Behind Act I signed is

a good start. I look forward to debate on educational excellence. See, this bill is one that says we're going to raise the standards, not lower the standards. This is a bill that says we believe every child can learn, not just a few. This is a bill that says we expect the very best. This is a bill that says we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations.

You see, if you believe every child can learn, then you want to know; you want to see. This is a bill that says, "For increased Federal dollars, you measure. You get to run your schools"—I believe in local control of schools—"but you measure." You show us whether or not every child is learning to read. And if we find they're not, parents need different choices. When we find that children aren't learning to read, we'll change the curriculum. When we find children stuck in schools that won't teach and won't change, we can demand something better. We've got to insist that no child be left behind in America.

And good policy also understands a vision for the future sees clearly the need to use our community college system to train workers for the jobs which actually exist. You see, we've got a lot of people who want to work, and there are new jobs being created in our economy, what they call the jobs of the 21st century. But they don't have the skills necessary to fill those jobs. This country must expedite, must help, must pay for through Pell grants and other assistance programs, training—programs to train workers for jobs which actually exist.

Sure, there's some jobs leaving, and that breaks our hearts. But there's new jobs being created—better paying, higher-quality jobs. And we have a duty to help train workers to meet those jobs. No, a vision for the future is one that understands that in order for us to compete, we've got to be the best place for people to do business. And the best place means good tax policy, good regulatory policy, and an educated workforce to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

And finally, you need to put me back in office because I understand the true strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. We talk a lot about our military being the strength of America, and it's an important part of our strength. And by the way, I intend to keep the military strong. And if you have a loved one in the military, you thank him on behalf of a grateful Commander in Chief. And we'll continue to push progrowth policies so that we're a wealthy nation. But the strength of this country is the fact that we've got citizens who are willing to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. The strength of this country is the fact that there are thousands and thousands of citizens who are willing to take time out of their life to help somebody who hurts, to help the lonely, to feed the hungry, to find shelter for the homeless.

You see, the great fabric of America is made up of the thousands acts of kindness and generosity that take place on a daily basis, not because Government has said to do so but because they've heard a call that is bigger than Government. They understand that a responsible citizen is one that reaches out to somebody who hurts. The job of the President is to capture and lift that spirit, is to call people to a service greater than self, is to help change this country one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time by rallying and tapping the true strength of the country, which is the hearts and souls of the American people.

Linda Rabolt is here today. She works for the Interfaith Hospitality Network. [*Applause*] That's good. Some of you heard about Linda. They work at churches in this community to serve 41 families. You see, they saw somebody who hurt, and they reached out to them. They're showing what it means to love a neighbor.

Here's what she said about serving the homeless: "It's not that they don't have needs and desires and dreams. They're just down on their luck." See, Linda sees a better day—a better day. She sees a bright future. "It's rewarding to be a part of their lives," she says, "and to watch them to grow and change and move on."

That's the spirit of this country, isn't it? What a fabulous country we have, a country that's resolute and determined, a country that's resolute never to give in to an enemy that hates us, determined to do what it takes to make the world more peaceful, a country that is compassionate and decent when it

comes to making sure the future is bright for every single citizen. And it is such an honor—such a high honor—to be the President of such a fantastic land.

I thank you for your support. I thank you for your friendship. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. at the Golden Lamb Inn. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley and State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters of Ohio; Mayor Amy Brewer of Lebanon; Jo Ann Davidson, Ohio Valley regional chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in Cincinnati, Ohio

May 4, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. It is exciting to end what has been a great bus trip across Ohio right here in a wonderful city, Cincinnati, Ohio. Thanks for coming out tonight. I appreciate you coming out. I appreciate you giving me a chance to thank you for what you're going to do as we come down the stretch in this campaign in 2004.

I'm here asking for your vote, and I'm here asking for your help.

Audience member. *Viva Bush!*

The President. *Vamos a ganar.* That means, we're going to win. We set up a web site called georgewbush.com. It will give you a chance to find out how to volunteer, how to register voters, how to turn them out. We need your help. And when you're talking to people, talk to people from all walks of life about this campaign. Talk to people who may never have voted before about this campaign. Talk to people from different parties about this campaign, because, see, we've got a positive vision. We've got a positive vision for everybody who lives in America. We've got a vision to make sure America is safer and stronger and better. We have a mission to make this country as hopeful as it can possibly be. Put out the word, and we will win in November of 2004.

I wish Laura were here to see this crowd. Listen, a good reason to put me back in there is so she will have 4 more years as the First Lady. She's a great First Lady. She's a fantastic wife and a great mom and a wonderful First Lady. I'm really proud of her. She sends her best. She sends all her best—she sends her best to all her friends here in Cincinnati.

By the way, a measure of a good President is whether or not he surrounds himself with excellence. I do. I put together a fantastic team to serve the American people, people from different backgrounds, people from different walks of life, smart and capable people, all of whom have come to Washington to serve a cause greater than themselves, the United States of America. Our country has got a great Vice President in Dick Cheney.

I want to thank the elected officials who have come here today. Your Governor, Bob Taft, is with us. And Governor, I'm honored you're here. Thank you for coming. Congressman Rob Portman is with us today. I appreciate Congressman Portman. Congressman Steve Chabot is with us today. I'm honored you're here. I mean, we've got statewide officials. We've got elected—local officials. We've got all kinds of people who are here, and I'm proud you've come.

I appreciate the grassroots people who are here. Listen, you've got to work hard to turn out the vote, and that's what we call grassroots. I want to thank you. I'm here to fertilize the grassroots today. I'm here to ask you to grow.

I want to thank our entertainers who are here. I'm proud you've come, Billy. It's good to see you again. I appreciate you coming. My friend Billy Cerveny was with us yesterday, as well as Steven Chapman. I'm honored that Steven was here as well.

The last 3 years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with a stock market in decline, an economy headed into recession. We delivered historic tax relief. And now, our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation in the world.

We uncovered corporate crimes that cost people their jobs and their savings, so we passed strong corporate reforms. We brought the wrongdoers to account, and we made it clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning, so we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them will learn, there is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, so we ended two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to stand against tyranny and to set nations free.

When Dick Cheney and I came to Washington, we found a military that was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our military the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. A President needs to step up and to make the hard decisions and to keep his commitments, and that is how I will continue to lead our great Nation.

I'm so glad you're here, because great events will turn on this election. The man who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. The security and prosperity of America are at stake. I'm running against an experienced United States Senator. He's been in Washington a long period of time.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, he's been there quite a while. He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He spent some time here in Ohio looking for the vote, just like I'm looking for the vote, and he's looking for endorsements, just like I'm looking for endorsements. But you know, he's claimed he's picked up some important endorsements from foreign leaders. He just won't give us their names. [*Laughter*] He did drop a hint a few days ago. He insisted, quote, "What I said is true"—what he said on national TV about the foreign leaders—"What I said is true. I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." End of quote. [*Laughter*] I've got a hunch this whole thing might be a case of mistaken identity. Just because somebody has an interesting accent, a nice suit, and a good table at a New York restaurant doesn't make him a foreign leader. Whoever these mystery men are will not be deciding the election. The American people will be deciding this election.

The people of this State and the people of this country have an unmistakable choice in this election. It's a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people. It's a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger. The other side hasn't offered much in the way of strategy to win the war or policies to expand our economy. We're into this campaign and all we hear is old bitterness, but they're going to learn something from the American people. Anger is not an agenda for the future of this country.

I will take on the big issues with optimism and resolve and determination, and I will make it clear to the American people I stand ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. With the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government could have. Our economy is getting better.

I know there are still people in this important State who hurt. There are still people looking for work. That's a reason to be—that's not a reason to fall into pessimistic policy. We've got to be optimistic, and there's reason to be optimistic. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Small businesses are vibrant. We're going through a time of transition, but things are getting better. Just look at the facts. The economy grew at a strong rate of 4.2 percent in the first quarter of this year.

Economic growth over the past three quarters has been the fastest in nearly two decades. In March, the economy added 308,000 jobs; 7,900 of those were created right here in Ohio.

No, there's been some tough times for people in Ohio. But listen to this: The unemployment rate has dropped from its high of 6.3 percent last summer to 5.7 percent in March. Manufacturing activity is increasing. Business investment is rising. Disposable income is up. Homeownership is at the highest rate ever. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponent has a different view of tax relief. When we passed an increase in the child credit to help families, he voted "no."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When we reduced the marriage penalty, he voted against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When we lowered a 10-percent break for working families—or created the 10-percent rate, he voted "no."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When we voted to reduce the taxes on dividends that seniors depend on, he voted against it. When we gave small businesses tax incentives to expand and hire, he voted "no."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Are you getting the picture? But when tax increases are proposed, it's a lot easier to get a "yes" out of him. Over the years, my opponent has voted over 350 times for higher taxes——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——including the biggest tax increase in American history. He supported raising the gas tax. He won't even give you a free car wash. [*Laughter*] There is a trend here. He's got a record. In this campaign thus far, he has proposed a lot of Government spending, over a trillion dollars thus far. And there's 6 more months to go. [*Laughter*] And yet, he says he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. You can't tax the rich enough to pay for all the spending promises he's made. So guess who's going to pay? You're going to pay. But the good news is, we're not going to let him raise your taxes. The tax relief we passed must be permanent. We don't need to be raising taxes on the American people.

In order to make sure this economy grows and people can find work, we've got to make sure we protect small-business owners and employers from frivolous and junk lawsuits. We need tort reform. We've got to help control the cost of the increasing medicine by medical liability reform. We've got to make sure the doctor-patient relationship is central to decisionmaking in health care through association health care plans and health savings accounts.

In order for us to grow and make sure we're the leading economy in the world so people can find work, Congress needs to pass an energy plan. We need an energy plan that encourages conservation, an energy plan that helps develop alternative sources of energy. We need an energy plan that has clean coal technology as a part of its supply. We need to make sure that we explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We need to have trade policy that is confident and optimistic. We need to reject economic isolationism. See, we're good at things here in America. We're good at growing crops. We're good at raising cows. We're good at high-tech. We're good at manufacturing. We've got the most productive workforce in the world. Rather than walling ourselves off from the world, we need a President who will open up markets. We can compete with anybody, any time, anywhere if the playing field is level.

This economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. And I've got a plan to keep us on the path to economic vitality and strong growth so people can find work, because I understand the role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish, in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses. I need 4 more years to make sure a pro-growth, pro-small-business agenda—[*applause*].

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Our future also depends on America's leadership in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida

is wounded but not broken. Terrorists are testing our will in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

This Nation is strong and confident in the cause of freedom. And today, no friend or enemy doubts the word of the United States of America. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban chose defiance, and the Taliban are no longer in power. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Iraq. The dictator chose defiance, and now the dictator sits in a prison cell.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget. America must confront threats before they fully materialize. In Iraq, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of Congress looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our Government.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons program. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein, the man who had used weapons of mass destruction before, the man who had terrorist ties, the man who paid suiciders to go kill innocent Israelis, refused to comply.

So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or take action to defend America. Faced with that choice, I will defend America every time.

My opponent admits that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He just didn't support my decision to remove Saddam from power. Maybe he was hoping Saddam would lose the next Iraqi election. [*Laughter*]

We showed the dictator and a watching world that America means what it says. Because our coalition acted, Saddam's torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, Iraq's weapons programs are ended forever. Because we acted, nations like Libya have gotten the message and have voluntarily disarmed. Because we acted, an example of democracy is rising at the very heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more free and America is more secure.

On the ground in Iraq, we still face serious and dangerous challenges. Illegal militias and remnants of the regime, joined by foreign terrorists, are trying to take by force the power they could never gain by the ballot. They know that a free Iraq will be a major defeat in the cause of terror. These groups have found little support among the Iraqi people. They will find no success in their attempts to shake the will of America. They do not understand this country. America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins.

Our coalition is implementing a clear strategy in Iraq. We will ensure an atmosphere of security as Iraqis move toward self-government. We support the efforts of local Iraqis to disarm the radicals in Fallujah. We made it clear that militias in Najaf and elsewhere must disarm or face serious consequences. American and coalition forces are in place, and we will enforce order in Iraq.

We will return sovereignty to the people of Iraq on the schedule that we agreed to. Like any proud people, Iraqis want to manage their own affairs, and that is a goal we share. On June 30th, a sovereign Iraqi interim government will take office.

These are tough days. We honor the sacrifice of those who have fallen. We appreciate their families. We ask for God's blessing. These are tough times. They're difficult tasks, but they're essential tasks. America will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

On national security, Americans have the clearest possible choice. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world, but only if other countries do not object. I'm all for united action, and so are our more than 30 coalition partners in Iraq. I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We've got fantastic troops. They've got to have the best supplies, best equipment, best body armor. And that's why I proposed an $87 billion supplemental last fall. Someone recently asked my opponent why he voted against that bill. Here is what he said: "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted

against it." The American President must speak clearly and mean what he says.

We have a difference of opinion. We have a difference of opinion about whether the war on terror is really a war at all. My opponent said, and I quote, "The war on terror is far less of a military operation and far more of an intelligence-gathering, law enforcement operation." I disagree—I disagree. Our Nation followed that approach after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. The matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled, but the terrorists were still training in Afghanistan, plotting in other nations, and drawing up more ambitious plans.

After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. With those attacks, the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got.

Our men and women in the military are taking great risks, and they're doing great work. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our freedom. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. And I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. We're strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, family and schools and religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We will not stand for Government discrimination against people of faith.

We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We will not stand for any attempt to weaken those reforms and send people back into lives of dependence.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts, and every person matters. We will not stand for the treatment of any life as a commodity to be experimented upon or exploited or cloned.

We stand for the confirmation of judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law. We will not stand for judges who undermine democracy by legislating from the bench and try to remake the values of America by court order.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in the new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of the leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget that day. I'll never forget the workers in the hardhats who were shouting, "Whatever it takes." I'll never forget the firefighter that pointed at me and said, "Don't let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

In these times, I have also been a witness to the character of this Nation. Not so long ago, some had their doubts about the American character, our capacity to meet serious challenges or to serve a cause greater than self-interest. Americans have given their answer. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country, and we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. You see, I'm running for 4 more years because we have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. I'm asking for your help because we have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all. May God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:48 p.m. at the Cincinnati Gardens Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; entertainers Billy Cerveny and Steven Curtis Chapman; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Interview With Alhurra Television

May 5, 2004

Abuse of Iraqi Prisoners at Abu Ghraib Prison

Q. Mr. President, thank you for agreeing to do this interview with us.

Evidence of torture of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. personnel has left many Iraqis and people in the Middle East and the Arab world with the impression that the United States is no better than Saddam Hussein regime. Especially when this alleged torture took place in the Abu Ghraib Prison, a symbol of torture of——

The President. Yes.

Q. What can the U.S. do, or what can you do to get out of this?

The President. First, people in Iraq must understand that I view those practices as abhorrent. They must also understand that what took place in that prison does not represent America that I know. The America I know is a compassionate country that believes in freedom. The America I know cares about every individual. The America I know has sent troops into Iraq to promote freedom—good, honorable citizens that are helping the Iraqis every day.

It's also important for the people of Iraq to know that in a democracy, everything is not perfect, that mistakes are made. But in a democracy as well those mistakes will be investigated, and people will be brought to justice. We're an open society. We're a society that is willing to investigate, fully investigate in this case, what took place in that prison.

That stands in stark contrast to life under Saddam Hussein. His trained torturers were never brought to justice under his regime. There were no investigations about mistreatment of people. There will be investigations. People will be brought to justice.

Media Coverage/Investigations

Q. When did you learn about the—did you see the pictures on TV? When was the first time you heard about——

The President. Yes, the first time I saw or heard about pictures was on TV. However, as you might remember, in early January, General Kimmitt talked about a investigation that would be taking place about accused—alleged improprieties in the prison. So our Government has been in the process of investigating.

And there are two—more than two investigations, multiple investigations going on, some of them related to any criminal charges that may be filed. And in our system of law, it's essential that those criminal charges go forward without prejudice. In other words, people need to be—are treated innocent until proven guilty. And facts are now being gathered.

And secondly, there is investigations to determine how widespread abuse may be occurring, and we want to know the truth. I talked to the Secretary of Defense this morning, by the way. I said, "Find the truth, and then tell the Iraqi people and the world the truth." We have nothing to hide. We believe in transparency, because we're a free society. That's what free societies do. They—if

there's a problem, they address those problems in a forthright, upfront manner. And that's what's taking place.

Accountability

Q. Mr. President, in a democracy and a free society, as you mentioned, people investigate, but at the same time, even those who are not directly responsible for these events take responsibility. With such a problem of this magnitude, do we expect anyone to step down? Do you still have confidence in the Secretary of Defense?

The President. Oh, of course I've got confidence in the Secretary of Defense, and I've got confidence in the commanders on the ground in Iraq, because they and our troops are doing great work on behalf of the Iraqi people. We're finding the few that wanted to try to stop progress toward freedom and democracy. We're helping the Iraqi people stand up a government. We stand side by side with the Iraqis that love freedom.

And—but people will be held to account. That's what the process does. That's what we do in America. We fully investigate. We let everybody see the results of the investigation, and then people will be held to account.

Human Rights Abuses/International Red Cross

Q. If your State Department issues a human rights report about practices around the world and abuses, and we call upon countries every once in a while to——

The President. Right.

Q. ——try to put pressure on them to allow International Red Cross to visit prisons and detention center, would you allow the International Red Cross and other human rights organization to visit prisons under the control of the U.S. military?

The President. Of course we'll cooperate with the International Red Cross. They're a vital organization, and we work with the International Red Cross. And you're right, we do point out human rights abuses. We also say to those governments, "Clean up your act," and that's precisely what America is doing.

We've discovered these abuses. They're abhorrent abuses. They do not reflect—the actions of these few people do not reflect the hearts of the American people. The American people are just as appalled at what they have seen on TV as the Iraqi citizens have. The Iraqi citizens must understand that. And therefore, there will be a full investigation, and justice will be served. And we will do to ourselves what we expect of others.

And when we say, "You've got human rights abuses, take care of the problem," we will do the same thing. We're taking care of the problem. And it's—it is unpleasant for Americans to see that some citizens, some soldiers have acted this way, because it does—again, I keep repeating, but it's true—it doesn't reflect how we think. This is not America. America is a country of justice and law and freedom and treating people with respect.

Cooperation Within Iraq

Q. Transferring control of Fallujah in Iraq to former army officers under Saddam Hussein led many people in Iraq and even in the Arab world to believe that the U.S. is lowering its expectation.

The President. Yes.

Q. How would you respond?

The President. Quite the contrary. We're raising expectations. We believe the Iraqi people can self-govern, and we believe the Iraqi people have got the capacity to take care of people who are willing to terrorize innocent Iraqi citizens. And that's what you're seeing in Fallujah. As a matter of fact, the general in charge of the operation in Fallujah had been imprisoned by Saddam Hussein. So he felt the vindictiveness of the Hussein regime.

And I've got confidence that Iraq will be a peaceful, self-governing nation. And I also have confidence that, with help, the Iraqi security forces will be strong against foreign terrorists and others who are willing to kill and criminals who are willing to try to wreak havoc in this society. Listen, there are thousands of Iraqi—innocent Iraqis who are dying at the hands of these killers. And we want to help decent, honorable Iraqi citizens bring peace and security to Iraq.

Q. So there is no reversal in policy of de-Ba'athification?

The President. Oh, no. There are citizens, for example, in the—amongst the teacher

ranks in Sunni—parts of Sunni Iraq that were denied the right to teach because they may have been affiliated with the Ba'athist Party in the past but who are very important to the future of Iraq because they're teachers. And of course, they are now being let back in the classroom, not to spread political propaganda but to teach, to teach children.

And obviously, there is a process of balancing those who may have been affiliated with the Ba'ath Party and those who are terrorists and killers. And obviously, terrorists and killers and extremists will not be a part of the Government, but people who are by and large peaceful people, who care deeply about the future of Iraq, will be. And that's what you're seeing taking place now.

Progress in Iraq/Transfer of Sovereignty

Q. It's been over a year since Saddam Hussein's regime has toppled down, and U.S. allies are in place right now in Iraq. What is your assessment, today, of U.S. allies and the Governing Council and the various factions of the Iraqi Government?

The President. Yes, well, first, I think we've made a lot of progress in a year.

Q. Do you still trust them? Do you still——

The President. Well, I trust the Iraqi people, let me put it to you that way. I believe the Iraqi people want to be free. By far, the vast majority of Iraqi citizens want to have a life that is peaceful, so they can raise their children, see that their children are educated, have a chance for their children to succeed. The businesspeople of Iraq just want a stable environment for them to be able to run their businesses and make a living. People want jobs. I mean, there are normal aspirations in Iraq that give me great confidence in the future of Iraq. People aspire for the same thing in Iraq as we do in America, a chance to succeed.

I also have confidence that the process we're under will work, which is to transfer sovereignty on June 30th. The people of Iraq must understand, sovereignty will be transferred on June 30th. And there's a process now in place to make sure that there's an entity to which we transfer sovereignty. And then there will be elections. And I think the timetable we're on is a realistic timetable. It's one that will be met, and I believe that the elections will help the Iraqi citizens realize that freedom is coming.

Israeli Disengagement Plan

Q. If I may ask you my final question on the issue of the peace efforts that you are conducting. You supported Prime Minister Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza, and you sent senior officials to Israel, and Israeli officials came to Washington and negotiated that plan. Do you think it was a mistake to support a plan before the Prime Minister secured the support of his own party?

The President. I think when you see a step toward peace, it's important for a peaceful nation like America to embrace it. And I felt that a withdrawal from the Gaza by the Israeli Prime Minister as well as the withdrawal from four settlements from the West Bank by the Israeli Prime Minister was a step toward peace. And at the time he did so, I called for the United States and others to seize this moment—the Quartet and the European Union and Russia and the United Nations and, hopefully, the World Bank, to seize this moment and to help the development of a Palestinian state that will be at peace with its neighbors, a Palestinian state that will provide hope for long-suffering Palestinian people.

I think this is an historic moment for the world. I think this is a good opportunity to step forth. I am confident that a peaceful Palestinian state can emerge. I'm the first President ever to call for the establishment of a Palestinian state. I still feel strongly that there should be one. I also recognize that we have got a duty, all of us, to fight off the terrorists who are trying to stop the spread of a peaceful Palestinian state, or the creation of a Palestinian state.

And now is the time to make progress. And I believe we can. There was a good statement yesterday out of the Quartet that confirmed our desire for a Palestinian state to emerge. And it's—what the Prime Minister of Israel did was—took a political risk; obviously he did. I mean, his own party condemned the statement—condemned the policy. However, I still believe it was the right thing for

him to do, and we support peace in the Middle East. And we support the vision of two states living side by side in peace.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Good job.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:18 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Brig. Gen. Mark T. Kimmitt, USA, deputy director of operations, Combined Joint Task Force 7; Iraqi General Mohammed Latif; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Interview With Al Arabiya Television

May 5, 2004

Abuse of Iraqi Prisoners at Abu Ghraib Prison

Q. Mr. President, thank you for giving us this chance here in Al Arabiya. Regarding the alleged abuse of Iraqi prisoners, six U.S. soldiers are being reprimanded. Do you think that's enough?

The President. First, I want to tell the people of the Middle East that the practices that took place in that prison are abhorrent, and they don't represent America. They represent the actions of a few people. Secondly, it's important for people to understand that in a democracy that there will be a full investigation. In other words, we want to know the truth.

In our country, when there's an allegation of abuse—more than an allegation in this case, actual abuse, we saw the pictures—there will be a full investigation, and justice will be delivered. We have a presumption of innocent until you're guilty in our system, but the system will be transparent. It will be open, and people will see the results.

This is a serious matter. It's a matter that reflects badly on my country. Our citizens in America are appalled by what they saw, just like people in the Middle East are appalled. We share the same deep concerns, and we will find the truth. We will fully investigate. The world will see the investigation, and justice will be served.

Middle East Reaction

Q. And you just—you've said this is reflected badly here, in United States of America. How do you think this will be perceived in the Middle East?

The President. Terrible. I think people in the Middle East who want to dislike America will use this as an excuse to remind people about their dislike. I think the average citizen will say, "This isn't the country that I've been told about." We're a great country because we're a free country, and we do not tolerate these kind of abuses.

The people of the Middle East must be assured that we will investigate fully, that we will find out the truth. They will know the truth, just like the American citizens will know the truth, and justice will be served.

Secondly, it's very important for the people of the Middle East to realize that the troops we have overseas are decent, honorable citizens who care about freedom and peace. They are working daily in Iraq to improve the lives of the Iraqi citizens, and these actions of a few people do not reflect the nature of the men and women who serve our country.

U.S. Response to Abuse of Prisoners

Q. After these pictures came out, some people in the area started talking about another alleged abuse. Could you tell us about what's being done just to prevent this from happening and just to improve the situation?

The President. Absolutely. I have told our Secretary of Defense, and I have instructed him to tell everybody else in the military, I want to know the full extent of the operations in Iraq, the prison operations. We want to make sure that if there is a systemic problem—in other words, if there's a problem system-wide—that we stop the practices.

Again, it's very important for people, your listeners to understand, in our country that when an issue is brought to our attention on this magnitude, we act, and we act in a way where leaders are willing to discuss it with the media. And we act in a way where, you know, our Congress asks pointed questions to the leadership. In other words, people want to know the truth. That stands in contrast to dictatorships. A dictator wouldn't be answering questions about this. A dictator

wouldn't be saying that the system will be investigated and the world will see the results of the investigation. A dictator wouldn't admit reforms needed to be done.

And so the people in the Middle East must understand that this was horrible, but we're dealing with it in a way that will bring confidence to not only our citizens, which is very important, but confidence to people of the world that this situation will be rectified and justice will be done.

Situation in Fallujah

Q. We are going to Fallujah—the way the situation is being resolved, is being considered in some parts of Iraq as a defeat to U.S. How do you address that, or do you have anything to address that issue?

The President. Yes, of course. The strategy in Fallujah is to empower Iraqis to step up and take control of the security situation, that we're on our way to the transfer of sovereignty. And people who feel like that they can wreak havoc on innocent Iraqis will be brought to justice in Iraq, either by Iraqi citizens and/or by coalition forces. And we're making progress.

There are a few people there in Iraq that want to claim credit for any situation on the ground, but the people in Fallujah are tired of foreign fighters and radicals and extremists preventing them from living a normal life. And those who remain in Fallujah will be taken care of. And the Iraqi forces that have been stood up are now in the process of patrolling the streets and bringing law and order to the streets.

Muqtada Al Sadr

Q. June the 30th is approaching. How do you think—still Mr. Sadr in defense with U.S., how do you think this person should be dealt with?

The President. I think he ought to be dealt with by the Iraqi citizens who are getting tired of him occupying the holiest of holy sites. And we are very respectful for the holy sites in Iraq. We understand their importance to the Iraqi citizens. Mr. Sadr is occupying those sites as if they're his, and I think the Iraqi citizens are getting tired of that.

We will deal with his militias, as will the Iraqi forces deal with his militias. Militias are people who are willing to kill, intimidate, and try to take matters into their own hands, which is not the way democracy functions. Free societies do not allow thugs to roam streets and hold people hostage to their whims. The Iraqis will deal with Mr. Sadr.

Transfer of Sovereignty

Q. June the 30th, do you think your administration is really prepared right now to have a very, very nice day—in that day to give the power to Iraqis?

The President. Absolutely. We're prepared to do so. When we say we're going to do something, we're going to do it. As you know, the United Nations, the coalition, as well as Iraqi citizens are preparing the entity to which sovereignty will be passed. There will still be a lot of hard work to do, and we want to help.

The Iraqi citizens must understand America is not going to leave until the job is complete. We want to help Iraq. We've made a commitment, and the United States will keep that commitment because we believe in freedom and we believe the people of Iraq want to be free. We believe they want to raise their children in a peaceful world. We believe they want to educate their children in good schools. We want to—we believe they want to realize their own personal ambitions. If they're a businessman or a businesswoman, they want to build their own business in peace. That's what we believe.

And therefore, we stand side by side with the people of Iraq who are peaceful. And there's a lot of peaceful people that look for a better day. I'm very proud of the brave Iraqis who've stood up, and I'm very proud of our own men and women in uniform who are helping Iraq to become free.

Al Qaida

Q. Mr. President, critics are saying that by your action in Iraq actually invited Al Qaida and other terrorists to do business with you over there. Could you address that?

The President. Sure. Do you remember September the 11th, 2001? Al Qaida attacked the United States. They killed thousands of our citizens. I will never forget what they have done to us. They declared war on us, and the United States will pursue them. So

long as I'm the President, we will be determined, steadfast, and strong as we pursue those people who kill innocent lives because they hate freedom.

And of course, Al Qaida looks for any excuse. But the truth of the matter is, they hate us, and they hate freedom, and they hate people who embrace freedom. And they're willing to kill innocent Iraqis because Iraqis are willing to be free. Iraqis are sick of foreign people coming in their country and trying to destabilize their country, and we will help them rid Iraq of these killers.

Democracy in the Middle East

Q. Mr. President, you went to Iraq as a part of your project in the Middle East, and flourish democracy over there. To which extent you are willing to go further to flourish a democracy? Are we going to see in the future more action against some other countries to flourish democracy over there, like Syria?

The President. No, I think it's—first of all, you've got to understand, sir, that military options are always my last option, not the first option, and that we can promote freedom without use of military. There are ways to stand with reformers and encourage reform and hold up examples of where societies are more stable and more free as a result of democracy and freedom.

Secondly, it's very important for the people of the Middle East to understand that freedom doesn't have to look like America. A free society doesn't have to look like an American society. Free societies will develop according to the cultures of the people in the regions and the Middle East. And reform and freedom take time. I understand that. It takes time for a free society to emerge. And so America can affect freedom in different kinds of ways.

But inherent in your question was, you know, am I anxious to use military power? Iraq was a unique situation because Saddam Hussein had constantly defied the world and had threatened his neighbors, had used weapons of mass destruction, had terrorist ties, had torture chambers inside his country, had mass graves. It was a very unique situation. And he was given a chance to meet the demands of the free world in a peaceful way, but he chose war.

We can make progress with freedom and peace because I believe deep in the heart and soul of every human being is a desire to be free. And America will continue to speak to those aspirations.

Peaceful Palestinian State

Q. My last question, Mr. President. You gave assurance to Sharon Government. From Al Arabiya, in these last questions, what kind of assurance are you going to give to Palestinian today?

The President. I stood up in front of the world and said that the Palestinian people ought to have their own state. I'm the first President to have ever said that. And my assurance is, is that I have not changed my vision of two states living side by side in peace. And that—Prime Minister Sharon made a decision to withdraw from the Gaza and from settlements on the West Bank, which I thought was a very strong decision and an important decision, because it now gives us a chance to move in and to say to the Palestinians, "Here's your chance to build a state, to put the institutions in place for a state to emerge, that speaks to the aspirations and hopes of the Palestinian people, that is a peaceful state."

And we want to help. And that's why yesterday you saw a statement coming out of the Quartet, which is a part of the roadmap process that says, "Let's work together to give the Palestinians hope." And my commitment to the Palestinian people is, when peaceful leaders emerge, when people are willing to fight off terror, they will have a great opportunity to see this state emerge. And America will help.

Q. Mr. President, thank you so much for discussing. Enjoy your day. It's sunny, so I hope you have a good day.

The President. Thank you, sir. It is a sunny day. Welcome.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:33 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Muqtada Al Sadr, Iraqi Shiite cleric whose militia engaged in an uprising in Iraq in early April; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration

May 5, 2004

Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here. Thank you all. Please be seated. *Sientese.* [*Laughter*] *Bienvenidos.* Welcome to the *Casa Blanca.* This is the people's house, and we're glad you're here to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. Laura and I are thrilled so many came today. We're pleased to celebrate this important day with you.

This day marks an important victory for freedom in Mexico. That's what the day marks, and that victory can be celebrated by all who love freedom. We honor freedom today. We also proudly observe Cinco de Mayo because we honor the ideals of liberty. We value the heritage and the contribution of Mexican Americans in our country, and we respect our friend and neighbor, the great nation of Mexico.

I want to thank Gaddi Vasquez for his service to our country as the Director of the Peace Corps. I think he is incredibly well suited to take on this important job of spreading peace and freedom and liberty throughout the world. Plus, you're a darn good introducer. [*Laughter*]

I'm proud that my longtime friend Tony Garza is with us today, the *Embajador a Mexico de los Estados Unidos.* Mr. Ambassador, thank you for coming. Roger Noriega is with us, who is the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. That means he's at the State Department in charge of affairs particularly with people who speak Spanish. It's a big job, and he's doing a heck of a good job. Thank you for coming.

My lawyer is here, the White House Counsel—*el juez*—Judge Al Gonzales. Thank you, Judge, for coming. I appreciate you being here. Hector Barreto, who is the Administrator of the Small Business Administration. Hector, *como esta?* Thank you for coming. *El Embajador de Mexico a los Estados Unidos*, Carlos de Icaza. Ambassador, thank you for coming.

And finally, we're very fortunate to have the Attorney General of Mexico with us today. Rafael Macedo de la Concha is with us. I'm so proud you're here, General. Thank you for coming, and thank you for the close cooperation. Delighted you're here.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who have joined us. I see we've got two strong Members of the House of Representatives. These brothers—the Diaz-Balart boys, I call them—[*laughter*]—Lincoln *y* Mario. They're from Miami, and they're great Members. Thanks for coming. Devin Nunes from California is with us. Congressman, thank you for coming. And finally, Congressman Steve Pearce from New Mexico—I appreciate you coming, Steve. I'm honored you're here.

Bishop, thank you for lending such grace to this occasion. I appreciated your strong words, and I really appreciate your faith, and I love your background. You're doing a heck of a job.

Marco, thank you as well. *Adonde esta, Marco?* Oh, Marco. [*Laughter*] I think you'd have gotten a better seat after all that work. [*Laughter*] Thank you for what you do. I appreciate you. And I want to thank Jimena. Thank you for coming. Your grandmother would be proud. I want to thank Banda El Recodo, for a very good job. And what a fabulous voice on Marco Antonio Solis. Thank you, Marco—very good job, appreciate you.

I've got to thank my friend Emilio Estefan for putting the show together again. I want to thank you, Emilio. And I always like to remind Emilio, both of us married really well. [*Laughter*] Didn't we? [*Laughter*]

I know we've got leaders from around the country—Hector Flores of LULAC is with us. Manny Lujan is with us. I want to thank the representatives from other grassroots organizations for coming today, for representing the Mexican American population so well in the Halls of Congress and throughout.

I see that the administrator of NASA is with us today, Sean O'Keefe. And with the administrator—I know I'm not supposed to be talking about the Mexican American astronaut that's with you—[*laughter*]—but you shouldn't have worn the uniform like that. [*Laughter*] You stand out. [*Laughter*] I'm

proud you're here, Commander. Thank you for coming.

Somebody said, don't introduce him, because there's supposed to be, like, a special announcement tomorrow. [*Laughter*] Something along those lines. [*Laughter*] Well, keep it off the record. [*Laughter*] Appreciate your service. Congratulations. It's a proud day for the Mexican American culture to know that you're—[*applause*].

The great triumph of Mexican forces on May the 5th, 1862, has inspired liberty-loving people everywhere, and it's helped shape the character of modern Mexico. Against great odds, a small and underequipped army defeated the skilled army of a European power. We've had that experience in America too. [*Laughter*]

Our two nations have very different histories, but our journeys have led us in the same direction. We believe in the rights and dignity of everyone. We believe that liberty is always worth defending. The ideals we share are among the many ties between our nations. Twenty-four million people of Mexican ancestry live in the United States today. It's almost 10 percent of our population, and America is better off for it.

Mexican Americans have brought many strengths to our Nation, a culture built around faith in God, a deep love for family, a belief that hard work leads to a better life. Every immigrant who lives by these values makes our country better and makes our future brighter.

Many Mexican and Hispanic Americans have shown their belief in this country by defending it. More than 600,000 of our veterans are of Mexican descent. Hispanic Americans have fought bravely in all our wars, including our own fight for independence. And for their valor, over three dozen have received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

On Cinco de Mayo, 2004, more than 130,000 Hispanic Americans are serving in the United States Armed Forces. Several of these fine men and women are with us today. Please rise so we can thank you for your service to our country.

Hispanic Americans serve our country in all kinds of ways. With us today are also firefighters from communities close by. They're part of the brave brotherhood of firefighters who answered the alarms and come to the aid of their neighbors against all hazards. We want to thank you for your service. We want to thank you for your sense of duty. We want to thank you for your contributions to our country. Welcome to the White House, and thanks for being here.

On this holiday, we also look with pride to the vital and enduring friendship between the United States and Mexico. We share the busiest border in the world. We share a growing trade relationship that amounts to more than $230 billion per year. We share a commitment to freedom and prosperity throughout our neighborhood.

In March, I hosted Vincente Fox—or we hosted Vincente Fox—[*laughter*]—at our ranch in Crawford, Texas. Our years of working together and our mutual respect are a reflection of the strong partnership between our two nations. Mexico and America have come a long way in 142 years, and we face the future as trusted partners, strong allies, and close friends.

Across Mexico and America today, there will be a great many celebrations of Cinco de Mayo, none of them quite like here in the White House—[*laughter*]—none of them with the fantastic entertainers we had here today. And I know we're starting a little early here, and I'm honored you could join us.

Happy Cinco de Mayo. May God bless Mexico, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Marco Antonio Solis, Jimena, and Emilio Estefan; Hector M. Flores, national president, League of United Latin American Citizens; Manual Lujan, Jr., former Secretary of the Interior; and President Vicente Fox of Mexico. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message on the Observance of Cinco de Mayo, 2004

May 5, 2004

I send greetings to those celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

On May 5, 1862, Mexican soldiers held back an invading army at the Battle of Puebla. This victory played a decisive role in the eventual expulsion of foreign forces from Mexico in 1867. Led by Texas-born Mexican General Ignacio Zaragoza, a small outnumbered militia of freedom-loving soldiers halted the invasion of their country. One hundred forty-two years after this victory, Cinco de Mayo pays tribute to the bravery and victory of General Zaragoza's soldiers and the strong, independent spirit of the Mexican people.

This observance is also a time to celebrate the strong friendship between the United States and Mexico. More than neighbors, we are partners in building a safer, more democratic, and more prosperous hemisphere. The United States continues to share close ties of family, culture, and history with Mexico and the Mexican people, and we recognize the vital role Mexican Americans play in shaping our Nation. We look forward to a future of continued friendship and collaboration with Mexico as we work to advance peace and democracy in the world.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a joyous celebration.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Statement Announcing a Request to Congress for the Establishment of a Contingency Reserve Fund

May 5, 2004

This morning, Secretary Rumsfeld and I discussed recommendations from our commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan about additional resources that they may require.

While we do not know the precise costs for operations next year, recent developments on the ground and increased demands on our troops indicate the need to plan for contingencies. We must make sure there is no disruption in funding and resources for our troops.

I am requesting that Congress establish a $25 billion contingency reserve fund for the coming fiscal year to meet all commitments to our troops and to make sure we succeed in these critical fronts in the war on terror. As my administration has previously said, we will pursue a full FY 2005 supplemental request when we can better estimate precise costs.

Our troops in Iraq are performing superbly in their efforts to help the Iraqi people realize a free and peaceful future. I have pledged to our troops that they will have all the resources they need to get the job done, and I look forward to working with Congress on this high priority.

Remarks at a Republican National Committee Dinner

May 5, 2004

The President. I'm ready. I'm here to tell you I appreciate your support, and I want your vote. I stand ready and eager to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

I've recently come off a bus tour in Michigan and Ohio. The crowds were big. The enthusiasm was high. Our support is strong. We're rolling on our way to victory in November of 2004.

There's going to be many turns in this campaign, but this will remain constant: I will offer a positive, optimistic, and hopeful vision to the American people. I have a plan to win the war on terror and to spread peace and freedom throughout the world. I have a plan to help create an environment so more jobs are created and every single citizen of this country can realize the great promise of our country. I have a plan to promote the compassion and spirit of this country, so all citizens—all citizens—can realize their dreams.

I will leave no doubt where I stand. I will leave no doubt that after 4 more years, this country will be safer and stronger and better. And with this message and with your help, I am confident that Vice President Cheney and I will be reelected.

A good reason to put me back in office is to make sure Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

Audience member. We love Laura!

The President. Yes, you love Laura, and I love Laura. [*Laughter*]

When you're out there gathering the vote, make sure you tell people that I put together a fantastic administration to serve the American people, people from all walks of life, people who have come to our Nation's Capital to serve the people, not their self-interest. I'm proud to be running with a fine Vice President, Dick Cheney.

And I appreciate the team we put together, starting with the RNC chairman, Ed Gillespie. He's a fine guy. I told Ed when he took the job, I said I want him reaching out to people from all walks of life. I want him to understand our message is so optimistic and hopeful that people, regardless of their political party, are going to like what they hear, that we've got to keep working with everybody in this country. I appreciate the fact that his wife, Cathy, has taken a strong lead in the campaign as well. She's working for "W Stands for Women."

I appreciate so very much the leadership that Al Hoffman has provided to make sure that the Republican National Committee is well funded. I want to thank Ann Wagner as the cochairman. I appreciate my friend Mercer Reynolds for being the Victory 2004 finance chairman. He got bumped up. He was the finance chairman for Bush-Cheney. He did such a good job that we moved him up to the Victory committee.

I want to thank all my friends who are seated on the stage here for working hard. I want to thank you all for coming. As Ed said, this is a record night. It wouldn't have happened without you. It's important to have enough fuel to make sure that the grassroots are activated as we come down the stretch next fall. That's what we're here to talk about.

I've got some members of my administration here tonight—fine Cabinet Secretaries Gale Norton, Ann Veneman, Tommy Thompson, and Spence Abraham. These people are doing a superb job on behalf of the American citizens, and I'm proud to call them Cabinet members in the Bush administration.

We've got a fantastic Congress right now. We've got great leadership in Bill Frist and Speaker Denny Hastert. I'm proud to be working with them. I not only want to make sure I find work after November—[*laughter*]—but I want them in power too. They made a big difference to this country.

I know that Senator George Allen is with us tonight from the great State of Virginia. I know my friend from the great State of Texas, Tom DeLay, is with us tonight. Majority Whip Roy Blunt from Missouri is with us. I want to thank Roy for being here. Congresswoman Deborah Pryce is with us as well, as are many other Members of the United States Congress.

I also want to thank my friend Collin Raye, a fantastic artist who has agreed to entertain, and I'm proud that he has come as well.

These last 3 years have brought serious challenges to this Nation, and we have given serious answers to those challenges. When we came to office, the stock market was declining, and this economy of ours was headed into a recession. But we acted. We delivered historic tax relief for the American people, and now our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning, so we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We've captured or killed many of the key Al Qaida leaders, and the rest of them will learn this: There is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, so we ended two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. And once again, America is proud to stand against tyranny and to set nations free.

When Dick Cheney and I came to office, we found a military that was underfunded and underappreciated, so we acted. Along with the Congress, we gave our military the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. Great events will turn on this election. The man who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. The security and prosperity of America are at stake.

I'm running against a tough opponent. We should not take him lightly. He's an experienced Senator who has built up quite a record. [*Laughter*] He's been in Washington long enough to take both sides on just about every issue. [*Laughter*] He voted for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq. My opponent's positions on these issues reminded me of a saying we have in Texas about the weather. [*Laughter*] If you don't like it, just wait a few minutes, and it will change. [*Laughter*]

He has an interesting way of saying things. You know we're both out looking for votes and endorsements. As you might know, he claims he picked up some important endorsements among foreign leaders. [*Laughter*] He just won't tell us who they are. [*Laughter*] He did drop a hint a few weeks ago on TV. He said, "What I said is true. I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." End quote. [*Laughter*] I got a hunch this whole thing might be a case of mistaken identity. [*Laughter*] Just because somebody has an accent—[*laughter*]—and a nice suit—[*laughter*]—and a good table—[*laughter*]—it doesn't make him a foreign leader. [*Laughter*] Whoever these mystery men are, they won't be deciding the election. The voters will be deciding the election.

The voters will have a clear choice in this campaign. It's a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people. It's a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger.

You know, thus far in the campaign we haven't heard much in the way of strategies from the other side to win the war on terror or to expand our economy. So far we've heard bitterness and outbursts instead of calm debate. The American people understand that anger is not an agenda for the future of America. I will take on the big issues with optimism and resolve and determination. And I will make it clear that we stand ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. With the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping to create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Government would have.

The entrepreneurial spirit in this country is strong. The economy grew at a strong rate of 4.2 percent in the first quarter. The economic growth over the past three quarters has been the fastest in nearly two decades. In March, the economy added 308,000 new jobs, the highest monthly job growth total in nearly 4 years. Since August, our economy has added over three-quarters of a million jobs. Across America, manufacturing activity is increasing. Business investment is rising. Disposable income is up. Mortgage and interest rates are near historic lows. Homeownership is at the highest rate ever. The tax relief, the pro-economic stimulus plan we passed is working.

There's a clear difference in this campaign about taxes. My opponent opposed the child—increase in the child credit, reducing the marriage penalty. He voted "no" when it came to creating a lower 10-percent rate for working families. He was against the stimulus package for small businesses. Yet, when it comes to increasing taxes, he's got a real record. [*Laughter*] It's a clear record. He's voted over 350 times for increased taxes on the American people. He supported higher gas taxes 11 times. He once favored an increase of 50 cents a gallon at the gas pump on the American people. That would cost the average driver $5 or more every time you fill up your tank. For that kind of money, you'd think he'd throw in a free car wash. [*Laughter*]

Campaigns can be dangerous when it comes to spending somebody else's money. It's easy to make promises. My opponent, thus far, has promised $1.9 trillion of new money, new expenditures. And we're just getting started in the campaign. [*Laughter*] Six months ago, he said he's going to pay for it by raising taxes on the rich. But that

wouldn't even get him half the money he needs. He's got what I call a "tax gap." [*Laughter*] He needs a lot of money to pay for his promises. And given his record, we know where that money will come from. It will come from working people in America. It will come from people trying to raise their families. It will come from small-business owners. The good news: He's not going to have that chance to raise taxes on the American people.

I have a better idea. We must keep taxes low. We should not raise taxes on the American people. We must do more to keep this economy growing, to create jobs. We need spending discipline here in the Nation's Capital. I look forward to working with Congress to bring much-needed discipline when it comes to spending your money. I have a plan to protect small-business owners and employees from frivolous lawsuits and needless regulation.

We must help control the cost of health care by giving people better access to affordable health care through association health plans and tax-free health savings accounts. Congress needs to pass medical liability reform to make sure that costs are lower.

In order to make sure we're strong, in order to make sure we can grow, in order to make sure people can find work, we need an energy policy in America, an energy policy that promotes conservation, alternative sources of energy, an energy policy that promotes clean coal technology, an energy policy that encourages environmentally friendly exploration for natural gas. One thing is for certain: We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure we grow and people can find work, this country must be confident about our ability to compete in the world. We need to knock down trade barriers. We need to open up new markets around the world for America's entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers. Empty talk about jobs and economic isolationism will not get anyone hired. The way to create jobs is to reelect a pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-entrepreneur President, George W. Bush.

Our future also depends on America's leadership in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists are testing our will in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

This Nation is strong and confident in the cause of freedom. Today, no friend or enemy doubts the word of the United States. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban chose defiance, and the Taliban are no longer in power. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Iraq. The dictator chose defiance, and now the dictator sits in a prison cell.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget and America must never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. In my administration, we looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat in Iraq. The United States Congress looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat.

In 2002, the U.N. Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. You see, we all understood that he had used weapons of mass destruction before. We remembered that he had terrorist ties. We remembered that he attacked countries in his neighborhood. We remembered clearly that he paid suiciders to go kill innocent Israelis. We remembered the nature of Saddam Hussein. But he chose defiance. He defied the demands of the free world. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

My opponent admits that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He just didn't support my decision to remove Saddam from power. Maybe he was hoping Saddam would lose the next Iraqi election. [*Laughter*] We showed the dictator and a watching world that America means what it says. Because our coalition acted, Saddam's torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, Iraq's weapons programs are ended forever. Because we acted, nations

like Libya got the message and have voluntarily disarmed. Because we acted, an example of democracy is rising at the very heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more free, and America is more secure.

We still face serious and continuing challenges in Iraq. These have been tough times for the American people. I understand that. See, we're facing illegal militias and remnants of a regime who are joined by foreign terrorists. They're trying to take force by power that they could never gain by the ballot. They know that a free Iraq will be a major defeat in the war on terror. They hate freedom. They can't stand the thought of free societies growing up in the Middle East. These groups find little support among the Iraqi people, and they will find no success in their attempts to shake the will of America. They don't understand our country. America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins.

We have a clear strategy in Iraq. We're working hard to ensure an atmosphere of security as Iraqis move toward self-government. We support the efforts of local Iraqis to disarm the radicals in their country. We stand with those brave souls who want their country to be free and peaceful. We made it clear to militias in Najaf and elsewhere to disarm or face grave consequences. Our forces are in position. Our forces are on the move. Our forces are on the offense. We will enforce order in Iraq.

And as we do so, we will return sovereignty to the people of Iraq on a schedule that we agreed to. Like any proud people, Iraqis want to manage their own affairs. On June 30th, a sovereign Iraqi interim government will take office. We will pass sovereignty. We will stay and stand with those people as a free country emerges. These aren't easy tasks for our country, but they're essential tasks. America will finish what we have begun, and we will win this victory in the war on terror.

On national security, Americans have a clear choice. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world, but only if other countries do not object. [*Laughter*] I'm for united action. We've put together coalitions to help bring the peace in Afghanistan. More than 30 coalition partners are in Iraq right now. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We have a difference about this war on terror. My opponent said the war on terror is far less of a military operation and far more of an intelligence-gathering, law enforcement operation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I disagree. Our Nation followed this approach after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. The matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled. Yet, the terrorists were still training in Afghanistan. They were still plotting in other nations. They were drawing up more ambitious plans.

After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. With those attacks, the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got.

Winning this war requires steadfast resolve. Winning this war requires clear purpose. Winning this war requires us to give our troops the best equipment in the world. That's why I proposed an $87 billion supplemental last fall. I want our troops to have the best. My opponent voted against that bill, and here's what he said: "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] The American President must speak clearly and mean what he says, if the world is to be more peaceful.

We've got a great military. We've got fantastic men and women serving our Nation. They're taking great risks, and they're doing excellent work. At bases across our country and the world, I have had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage, and I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the hearts and souls of the American people. We are strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, families and schools and our religious congregations. This

is a fabulous nation because of the people of this Nation. I'm constantly amazed by the generous acts of kindness and decency and compassion that take place on a daily basis in our country. We've got people mentoring children, feeding the hungry, finding shelter for the homeless, providing love for the lonely. And it all happens not because of government but because of the compassion of the American people.

I see the culture of our country changing. It's changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else"—[*laughter*]—to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in the responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high, when challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September 14, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I remember a guy pointed at me and said, "Don't let me down." Workers in hardhats, policemen, and firefighters were shouting, "Whatever it takes." As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend our country, whatever it takes.

In these times, I have also been witness to the character of this Nation. Not so long ago, some had their doubts about the American character, our capacity to meet serious challenges or to serve a cause greater than self-interest. Americans have given their answer. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion that runs so deep in our country. We've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead.

I'm running because there's more work to do. We have a war to win. And the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. We have an obligation to work together to make this country safer and stronger and better. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our great land, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. May God bless. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ed Gillespie, chairman, Republican National Committee, and his wife, Cathy; Al Hoffman, finance chairman, Ann Wagner, cochair, and Mercer Reynolds, Victory national finance chairman, Republican National Committee; country music entertainer Collin Raye; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba

May 6, 2004

Mr. Secretary, thank you for the report you've just given me. I've received a Commission for the Assistance of a Free Cuba. It's a report from a Commission that I have put together in my administration to hasten the day that Cuba will be a free country.

We believe the people of Cuba should be free from tyranny. We believe the future of Cuba is a future of freedom. It's in our Nation's interest that Cuba be free. It's in the neighborhood's interest that Cuba be free. More importantly, it's in the interest of the Cuban people that they be free from tyranny.

This strategy is a strategy that encourages the spending of money to help organizations

to protect dissidents and to promote human rights. It is a strategy that encourages a clear voice of the truth being spoken to the Cuban people through Radio and TV Marti. It is a strategy that will prevent the regime from exploiting hard currency of tourists and of remittances to Cubans to prop up their repressive regime. It is a strategy that says we're not waiting for the day of Cuban freedom; we are working for the day of freedom in Cuba.

The Commissioners did good work. I appreciate it, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With King Abdullah II of Jordan

May 6, 2004

President Bush. Your Majesty, welcome once again to the White House. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate the opportunity to hear your thoughts on a range of issues that face your country and mine at this time of challenge and opportunity in the Middle East.

The economic relationship between our two countries has never been stronger. We continue to increase the ties of trade and investment, creating new opportunities for both our people. The free trade agreement between Jordan and the United States is a model for the region, as my Government works to build a Middle East free trade agreement.

The United States is committed to helping Jordan along the path to prosperity through our strong support at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. And we're proud to support Jordan through our support for Jordan's social and economic transformation program.

His Majesty and his team are reform-minded individuals who care deeply about the citizens of the Kingdom of Jordan. We spent quite a deal of time—quite a bit of time talking about lasting prosperity in Jordan and our desire to help Jordan achieve lasting prosperity. We also know that lasting prosperity requires lasting security and peace in the region. Our two countries are working closely to ensure that the Middle East becomes safer and more prosperous and more free.

The fall of Saddam Hussein removed a source of instability and intimidation from the heart of the Middle East. All of Iraq's neighbors, including Jordan, are safer now. And the emergence of a peaceful, prosperous, and free Iraq will contribute to Jordan's security and prosperity.

The United States strongly supports the efforts of U.N. Secretary* General's Special Adviser Brahimi to work with Iraqis to develop an interim government. His Majesty and I talked about the fact that on June 30th, a sovereign Iraqi Government will take office. Our coalition partners will continue to work with the United Nations to prepare for nationwide elections that will choose a new Government in January of 2005.

Jordan and the United States share a vision for a free, stable, and prosperous Middle East. Under the King's leadership, Jordan has become a force for reform and positive change in the region. This month, Jordan will be hosting a meeting of the World Economic Forum, another important milestone on the Middle East journey to greater openness and opportunity and liberty. Next June, G–8 nations will discuss ways that we can support reform in the Middle East. We will look to the results of your World Economic Forum, Your Majesty, as a guide for future actions.

His Majesty and I also discussed our ongoing quest for a just and durable peace between Israel and Palestine. I commend the King's personal commitment to peace and justice for all parties. I remain committed to the vision I laid out here in the Rose Garden on June 24, 2002, of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and to the establishment of a Palestinian state that is viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent.

I support the plan announced by Prime Minister Sharon to withdraw settlements from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. This

* White House correction.

bold plan can make a real contribution to peace, particularly if reform-minded Palestinians will step forward and lead toward the establishment of a peaceful Palestinian state.

As I have previously stated, all final status issues must be negotiated between the parties in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. And the United States will not prejudice the outcome of those negotiations. The roadmap is the—is the best path to realizing the two-state vision. That is why the roadmap is the plan endorsed by the Palestinians, Israel, the United Nations, the European Union, Russia, the United States, and many other nations. That's why my administration is committed to making it a reality.

Today the King had some suggestions about how to explain our position to the Palestinians. And I appreciated your advice, Your Majesty. He advised that I make sure the Palestinians understand my desire for a just peace, my desire for there to be a prosperous country, my desire that the Palestinian people have a chance to realize their hopes and aspirations. I told His Majesty I will shortly send Mr. Korei, the Palestinian Prime Minister, a letter that will explain my views, and we will expand dialog between the United States and Palestinians. I want to appreciate your wise counsel, Your Majesty.

We also talked about what has been on the TV screens recently, not only in our own country but overseas, the images of cruelty and humiliation. I told His Majesty as plainly as I could that wrongdoers will be brought to justice and that the actions of those folks in Iraq do not represent the values of the United States of America.

I told him I was sorry for the humiliation suffered by the Iraqi prisoners and the humiliation suffered by their families. I told him I was equally sorry that people who have been seeing those pictures didn't understand the true nature and heart of America. I assured him Americans like me didn't appreciate what we saw, that it made us sick to our stomachs. I also made it clear to His Majesty that the troops we have in Iraq, who are there for security and peace and freedom, are the finest of the fine, fantastic United States citizens who represent the very best qualities of America, courage, love of freedom, compassion, and decency.

Your Majesty, I'm proud you're here. I appreciate you coming. Jordan is a friend of the United States, and friends look out for one another. I understand your country and your people have important interests at stake in the Middle East. Your country has important interests at stake when it comes to a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement. You've got important interests in the emergence of a new Iraq. I assure you, my Government views Jordan's security and prosperity and territorial integrity as vital. We will oppose any developments in the region that might endanger your interests.

I look forward to working closely with you to achieve peace and freedom. We'll work with you to assist you in your historic efforts to lead Jordan to greater peace and freedom and prosperity.

Welcome.

[*At this point, King Abdullah responded in Arabic, and no translation was provided. He then continued his remarks in English.*]

King Abdullah II. Mr. President, thank you for this opportunity to meet with you today and discuss vital issues of mutual interest to both our countries.

I remain very concerned about the critical phase our region is passing through. It is very important for the moderate voices seeking peace in our region to prevail so that we can break out of the cycle of violence which has held us back for too long and put the region on the new path to stability and prosperity.

I'd like to outline the Jordanian position on the peace process, particularly the view of recent developments. We feel that any unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank should be part of the roadmap and should lead to the achievement of your vision of a two-state solution. Let me stress that a viable, sovereign, and independent Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 borders is also in Jordan's national interest. Failing to achieve such an outcome would invoke other options, all of which would endanger my country's interests and that of the region. This is one of the reasons why Jordan insists

on a two-state solution and why it supports the roadmap as the mechanism to get there.

Jordan remains committed to a final and comprehensive permanent status agreement based on the foundations of the Madrid Conference; the principle of land for peace; U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 1397; agreements reached by the parties; and the Arab initiative endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit.

Jordan also believes all final status issues, including borders, refugees, Jerusalem, and settlements, should be a matter for the parties to decide. I am encouraged by what I've heard from you today, sir, that these issues are not to be prejudiced and should be mutually agreed by the parties.

In the context of the roadmap, I want to assure you, Mr. President, that Jordan is ready to do its part in assisting the Palestinian Authority to rebuild its capability and assume full control of the security situation.

Jordan stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States and the international community in our common fight against terrorism. We cannot allow the terrorists' political agenda to succeed, and we assure you that Jordan will continue to do its utmost to help win this cause.

Jordan is committed to support Iraqis in their quest to regain their sovereignty, rebuild their institutions, and establish a society based on freedom and democracy. The stability, unity, and territorial integrity of Iraq is an objective we both share, and we are determined to achieve it.

Jordan is also committed to a process of political and economic reform in the region. We have adopted a far-reaching plan that addresses the key areas of good governance, political freedoms, women's rights, judicial reform, economic reform, educational reform, and the liberalization of the economy. We also are strongly committed to a key role by civil society. Our aim is to move towards a system that respects diversity and guarantees pluralism at all times so that democracy is not used by any who might opt to subject to it once and then deny it to others.

Mr. President, the leadership of the United States is crucial in all our efforts to reach a just and lasting peace of the Middle East. I want to thank you again for the opportunity, and I am determined to work with you to achieve this goal in a timely manner.

President Bush. Thank you, Your Majesty.

We'll take a couple of questions apiece per side. Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld/Abuse of Iraqi Prisoners

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Harkin said today that for the good of the country, the safety of our troops, our image around the globe, Secretary Rumsfeld should resign; if he doesn't resign, the President should fire him. We know you weren't happy with him yesterday. Should he keep his job?

And for Your Majesty, how much damage did these images do in your country?

President Bush. Secretary Rumsfeld is a really good Secretary of Defense. Secretary Rumsfeld has served our Nation well. Secretary Rumsfeld has been the Secretary during two wars. And he is—he's an important part of my Cabinet, and he'll stay in my Cabinet.

King Abdullah II. Thank you. Mr. President, I think—the reaction in Jordan as well as the reaction here in the United States was the same. I think we're all horrified by the images. But as has been clearly explained here in Washington, that an immediate investigation has been asked for to bring the people who perpetrated these heinous crimes to justice. And we hope that that will happen very quickly and that it doesn't reflect on the morals, the values that the United States stands for. I am quite convinced that once the investigation is underway, those who were guilty of these crimes will be brought to justice.

Roadmap for Peace

Q. Your Majesty, are you optimistic in regard to the movement of the roadmap?

And for you, President, in light of your discussion today with His Majesty, do you see U.S. involving itself soon in the actual implementation of the roadmap?

King Abdullah II. Well, I am very encouraged by what I've always seen as a dedicated position from the President of the United States. He was the first President to articulate a viable, independent Palestinian

state and created a mechanism, the roadmap, to be able to achieve that. Our meetings today reaffirmed the American position as it always has been, and I think that definitely we are reassured in Jordan, and we hope that the President's statements will reassure everybody else in the Middle East.

President Bush. Yes, we support the roadmap. As a matter of fact, the Secretary of State was recently meeting with the Quartet, which is an integral part of the roadmap. Here's what I believe has to happen: The world must recognize the possibility of a Palestinian state. I mean, the development of a Palestinian state is—that's free and democratic—and by the way, democracy doesn't have to look like America or Europe; it's got to be attuned to the cultures and to the Palestinian people. It's what they want. But nevertheless, development of a state that's free and peaceful will change the dynamic of the Middle East.

I mean, the Palestinians are people who need hope—hope for a better life, hope to be able to make a living, hope to raise their families in a peaceful situation. That's what they want, and the best opportunity for that to happen is for there to be a state that emerges that provides the framework for a peaceful coexistence in the Middle East. And that requires not only the United States being involved, and the European to be involved and Russia and the United Nations to be involved; it requires that reform-minded Palestinians step up and work with the world to develop the institutions necessary for a state to evolve. That's what has to happen. That's roadmap. In other words, that's how you head down the road to peace.

And as a peaceful Palestinian state grows, one that earns the confidence of not only His Majesty or the United States or other countries in the world, the final status issues become easier to solve. And so what we must do now is take advantage of an opportunity to begin the process of the development of a Palestinian state. And that's where the world must focus. And I believe we can achieve that. And I believe that by achieving it, it will be a very hopeful moment for people. And it's possible; it just takes vision and will.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Investigation of Prisoner Abuse/ President's Reaction to Abuse

Q. Mr. President, if this problem at the prisons was first noticed late last year, why has it taken this long for actions to be taken? And what did you tell Secretary Rumsfeld yesterday?

President Bush. I tell him I should have known about the pictures and the report. And as I understand it, the—General Kimmitt declared to the press corps, in Iraq, I believe it was, that there was an ongoing investigation. In other words, he made it clear. The Army said, "We've discovered something. We've discovered an issue, and therefore, we're now going to investigate it." It was a declaration to—to the world that there was an issue, and then there is a process.

But part of what this ongoing investigation will do, will answer that question, answer your questions, so we better understand the process, the procedures, and more importantly, to make sure that it doesn't happen again. So as I told His Majesty, I said, we will—people will be brought to justice in a way commensurate with how our system works.

We also want to make sure there's not a larger problem. And that's what the Secretary has assured me will happen. In other words, we will take a good, full look at a variety of issues to make sure it doesn't happen.

The acts were abhorrent, Steve. They sickened my stomach. I know they sickened yours, too. You're a decent American. Any decent soul doesn't want a human being treated that way. And it is—it's a stain on our country's honor and our country's reputation. I fully understand that, and that's why it's important that justice be done.

But it's also important for people—and I explained this to His Majesty, and I think he understands this, that the actions of the people in that prison do not reflect the nature of the men and women who wear our uniform. We've got brave souls in Iraq, sacrificing so that somebody can be free. And helping that Iraqi citizen be free, it helps America be more secure. There are thousands of acts of kindness and decency taking place every day in Iraq, because our soldiers,

our men and women in uniform, are honorable, decent, loving people.

And we'll find out the truth. We'll take a good look at the whole system to determine—make sure this doesn't happen again. But I am—I am sickened by what I saw and sickened that somebody gets the wrong impression of people who are serving this country and this world with such dignity.

One more question.

Q. Your Majesty?

President Bush. Wait, you're not a Jordanian.

King Abdullah II. We already asked a question.

President Bush. You want to call on an American? That's very noble of you, Your Majesty. [*Laughter*] Very thoughtful.

Jordan's Role in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, are you asking Arab nations to send troops to Iraq?

And Your Majesty, would you send Jordanian troops to Iraq?

President Bush. I've never asked a nation to do that which they aren't comfortable doing. Jordan has been a loyal friend. They've contributed in so many ways to peace and stability. We did discuss Afghanistan, but we have not discussed sending troops to Iraq.

I'll tell you, His Majesty has got good advice, though, about Iraq. He's in the neighborhood. He hears from people. He's constantly aware of what's going on on the ground, and his advice has been very good. And part of the advice is to make sure that Sunni Iraqis have got a bright future. In other words, people aren't going to be buying into the transfer of sovereignty if they don't think tomorrow is going to be a better day. And he gave me very good advice about making sure that there's a distinction between those who are violent, those who are corrupt, those who are—would not serve a new country well and the thousands who will be honorable citizens at working together to make sure Iraq emerges as a free, contiguous country.

And I told His Majesty—I think he gets the sense from me—we have an historic opportunity to begin to change a part of the world that needs to be changed in some areas. And here is a chance to take what was a threat and a destabilizing force and convert it into a force for good and reform and hope.

And I appreciate your vision and your understanding of that, Your Majesty.

King Abdullah II. I think that we in Jordan are too close, as other countries to Iraq are also, to send troops. I think it would be very difficult for Jordanians to be objective in committing troops to Iraq. We do have a long history of U.N. peacekeeping operations all over the world, but at this stage, I think the politics of the issue does not make sense for Jordanians to send troops at this time.

President Bush. Thank you, Your Majesty. Good job. Good job.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:03 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the U.N. Secretary-General; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; Prime Minister Ahmed Korei of the Palestinian Authority; and Brig. Gen. Mark T. Kimmitt, USA, deputy director of operations, Combined Joint Task Force 7.

Remarks on the National Day of Prayer

May 6, 2004

Thank you all. Please sit down. Please be seated. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. I'm honored to join you at this important annual event.

Since the Continental Congress sat in Philadelphia, America has, from time to time, set aside a national day of prayer. Under a law signed by President Ronald Reagan, that day comes every year on the first Thursday in May. That would be today. [*Laughter*]

Today in our Nation's Capital and around the country, we pause to acknowledge our reliance on Almighty God, to join in gratitude for His blessings and to seek His guidance in our lives and for our Nation.

Prayer and songs of praise go together, and we're really thankful this afternoon for the beautiful music of the Washington Bach Consort, led by J. Reilly Lewis. Thank you all for being here. And we are thankful for

the voice of Beth Cram Porter. I mean, what a voice. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

We are as grateful as well to all the organizers of the National Day of Prayer and especially for the gracious leadership of Shirley Dobson. We're also glad you brought Jim with you. [*Laughter*]

Colonel Oliver North is the 2004 National Day of Prayer Honorary Chairman. Thank you for taking on the job. I appreciate it. I appreciate Dr. Barry Black, the Chaplain of the United States Senate. I asked him if he had any one-liners before I came up here. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Father Daniel Coughlin, who will join us shortly. And Rabbi, thank you for coming. Rabbi Weinreb, I'm honored that you're here. I appreciate your reading. I also want to welcome Vonette Bright, the former National Day of Prayer Task Force chairman. Vonette, we're honored you're with us. Thank you for coming.

At so many crucial points in the life of America, we have been a nation at prayer. Abraham Lincoln, from this house, called the Nation to prayer in the darkest days of the Civil War. Franklin Roosevelt, 60 years ago on D-day, led the Nation in prayer over the radio, asking for God to watch over our sons in battle.

A prayerful spirit has always been a central part of our national tradition, and it remains a vital part of our national character. Americans of every faith and every tradition turn daily to God in reverence and humility. We bring our cares to Him knowing He is our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. It was Lincoln who called Americans "the almost chosen people." [*Laughter*] At that word, "almost" makes quite a difference. [*Laughter*]

Americans do not presume to equate God's purposes with any purpose of our own. God's will is greater than any man or any nation built by men. He works His will. He finds His children within every culture and every tribe. And while every human enterprise must end, His kingdom will have no end. Our part, our calling is to align our hearts and action with God's plan, insofar as we can know it. A humble heart is not an indifferent heart. We cannot be neutral in the face of injustice or cruelty or evil. God is not on the side of any nation, yet we know He is on the side of justice. And it is the deepest strength of America that from the hour of our founding, we have chosen justice as our goal.

Our greatest failures as a nation have come when we lost sight of that goal, in slavery, in segregation, and in every wrong that has denied the value and dignity of life. Our finest moments have come when we have faithfully served the cause of justice for our own citizens and for the people of other lands. And through our Nation's history, we have turned to prayer for wisdom to know the good and for the courage to do the good.

Many people in every age have made the same request of the wise and the holy: Teach us to pray. One of the answers begins with "Our Father, who art in Heaven." That answer has guided people through two millennia. In that example, we learn to give praise where it is due. We recognize that all that we have and all that we are come as gifts, and it is natural to be grateful to the Giver.

Americans, on this National Day of Prayer, are thankful. We're thankful for our freedom, for so many blessings, large and small, and we're thankful for this wonderful land we call home.

In prayer, we offer petitions, because the Maker of the Universe knows our cares and our needs. For our Nation today, the need is great, as young men and women face danger in our defense, for the sake of freedom and for the sake of peace. We pray that God's hand will protect them and deliver them safely home. We pray for the loved ones who anxiously await their return. And we pray for the families that have known great loss, that they might receive God's peace in the midst of their sadness.

Prayer also teaches us to trust, to accept that God's plan unfolds in His time, not our own. That trust is not always easy, as we discover in our own lives, but trust is the source of ultimate confidence. We affirm that all of life and all of history rests entirely on the character of our creation and our Creator. And His love and His mercy extend to all and endure forever.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to J. Reilly Lewis, music director and founder, Washington Bach Consort; Shirley Dobson, chairman, National Day of Prayer Task Force, and her husband, James; Rev. Daniel P. Coughlin, Chaplain, U.S. House of Representatives; and Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, executive vice president, Orthodox Union.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments

May 6, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, Labor, and the Treasury; the Corps of Engineers; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and the Securities and Exchange Commission. In addition, I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2004 language proposals for the Departments of Health and Human Services and the Treasury. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2005 Budget would not be increased by these requests.

This transmittal also contains FY 2005 budget amendments for the legislative branch. As a matter of comity, appropriations requests of the legislative branch are commonly transmitted without change.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Remarks in Dubuque, Iowa

May 7, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I'm really glad you're here. It is great to be back in Dubuque. Once again, here I'm asking for the vote. [*Laughter*] I'm asking for your help. I remember last time I campaigned here, the crowds weren't quite as big—[*laughter*]—neither was the entourage. [*Laughter*]

But I am thrilled to be here. I know most of you are here to see Laura, and I appreciate you coming. She's such a fabulous First Lady and a great wife and wonderful mom that I think she deserves 4 more years as the First Lady.

Now, I'm here to ask for your help. I want to thank those who are involved with the grassroots. I want to thank those who are willing to put up the signs and to talk to your neighbors, those who are willing to go to the community centers and the houses of worship, those who are willing to work door to door and remind people that this administration has a positive vision, a hopeful vision, an optimistic vision for everybody who lives in this country.

I want you to remind them I got a plan to win the war on terror and to spread peace and freedom throughout the world, a plan that helps to create jobs and spreads opportunity to every corner of America, a plan that taps into the compassionate spirit of our country. Working together, we'll make this country safer and stronger and better. We got a positive platform, one that I am convinced the American people understand and appreciate. We will become reelected on November the 2d.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. When you're out there gathering up the vote—by the way, make sure you talk to discerning Democrats and independents as well. [*Laughter*] And remind them I put together a fantastic team of people to serve this country, people who have come to Washington, DC, from all walks of life, from different backgrounds, all bound together by the desire to serve this country, not their self-interest.

We've got a fabulous Vice President in Dick Cheney. One time I had given a speech, and Mother was in the crowd. I said, "You know, Dick Cheney is the finest Vice President our country has ever had." She said, "Wait a minute, buster." [*Laughter*]

I am proud to have traveled with some really fine Members of the Congress. Iowa sent some good, decent souls to Washington,

DC, to represent you and to represent our Nation. And one such person is the fantastic United States Senator Chuck Grassley. Remember when we campaigned together? We'd be traveling the backroads of Iowa, and he would say, "I know the farmer who lives there." [*Laughter*] And we'd go down the road for another couple of miles, and he'd say, "Oh, I know who lives there." No wonder this guy is constantly reelected. He not only does his job, he knows everybody, everywhere across the State of Iowa.

You've got a really good Congressman representing you in Washington, DC. I'm going to tell you, the budget chairman, Jim Nussle, is a good man. I'm proud to call Congressman Jim Leach my friend, a good, thoughtful, decent guy. I'm proud that people from the other side of the State are coming here to east Iowa. And we got a fine Congressman from the western part of the State in Congressman Tom Latham. Thank you for coming, Congressman. I had your breakfast laid out for you on Air Force One, but you were a no-show. [*Laughter*] I won't hold it against you. [*Laughter*] And I, finally, appreciate—finally, I want to appreciate—send my appreciation to Congressman Steve King from the great State of Iowa. Thank you for coming, Congressman.

I know there's a lot of State officials who are here today, senators and representatives. I'm honored you all are here. I want to thank you for your service to the State of Iowa. I appreciate the—I appreciate you working on behalf of the people of your districts.

I was also honored to have been greeted by your mayor, Mayor Terry Duggan. He was out at the airport today. I am so honored, Mayor, that you took time to be here to greet the President of the United States. My only advice to you: Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] No, they tell me he's doing a fine job—a fine job. And I really do appreciate you coming, Mayor.

I want to thank my friend Michael Martin Murphy for coming today—appreciate you coming.

Laura and I grew up in west Texas. We grew up in a town called Midland, Texas. That's right next door to Odessa, Texas. [*Laughter*] And when you lived in Midland, Texas, you didn't particularly care for the people who played football for Odessa, Texas. And I'm proud to be associated, however, with a former Odessa football star, a man who has made his mark in helping youngsters understand the values of life, a person who came to this State and captured the hearts of the citizens of Iowa because he's such a decent fellow, a pretty good football coach too, my friend Hayden Fry—appreciate you.

When you're out rounding up the vote, you might start by reminding your friends and neighbors what this administration has accomplished. The last 3 years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We've led. We've risen to the challenge. We came into office with a stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession. But we acted, delivered historic tax relief, and now our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation in the world.

We uncovered corporate crimes, crimes that cost people their jobs and their savings, so we worked with the Congress, and we passed strong corporate reforms. Wrongdoers are being brought to account. It is clear in America, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of our country.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning, so we have pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We've captured or killed many leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest will learn there is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.

When Dick Cheney and I came to Washington, we found a military that was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our military the resources and respect they deserve, and today, no one can question the skill, the strength, and the spirit of the United States military.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We ended two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to stand against tyranny and to set nations free.

It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. Great events

will turn on this election. The man who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. The security and prosperity of America are at stake. I look forward to this campaign. I'm running for a reason. I want our country to be safer and stronger and better. I've got a vision for the future of this country that is optimistic. I know where I want to lead us. I look forward the explaining it in clear and simple terms to the American people.

And we've got a tough race, so I've asked you to come today to get your uniforms ready, get ready for the contest. I take nothing for granted. I look forward to getting out amongst the people and talking about my vision.

I'm running against an experienced United States Senator. He's been in Washington an awful long period of time. He's been there so long—he's been there long enough to take both sides on just about every issue. He was for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for No Child Left Behind, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq. His positions remind me of that old Texas saying, "If you don't like the weather, just wait a few minutes and it will change." [*Laughter*]

No, he's an experienced Senator. He's a tough opponent, and I understand that. I look forward to an honest and calm debate on the issues. I look forward to gathering the support of the American people. That's the endorsement I seek. I seek your endorsement. I seek the people who are working every day.

He claims to have picked up some important endorsements amongst foreign leaders. [*Laughter*] He just won't tell us their names. [*Laughter*] He did tell us—gave us a hint the other day. On national TV, he said, and I quote, "What I said is true. I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." Now, I think this may be a case of mistaken identity. [*Laughter*] Just because a fellow has an accent—[*laughter*]—and a fancy suit and a nice table at a New York restaurant, it doesn't mean he's a foreign leader. [*Laughter*] But whoever these mystery people are, they will not determine the course of this election. The American people will decide the outcome of this election.

The voters will have a clear choice. It's a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the working people. It is a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger. I look forward to taking on the big issues with a sense of optimism and resolve and determination. I will make it clear that I stand ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue in this campaign and a big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. With the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping to create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The economy grew at a rate of 4.2 percent in the first quarter, and the economic growth over the past three quarters has been the fastest in nearly two decades. Manufacturing activity is increasing. Business investment is rising. Disposable income is up. Inflation is low. Mortgage and interest rates are at near-historic lows. Homeownership is at the highest rate ever. Our farm economy is strong. America has had 4 straight years of rising farm exports, and last year we had the highest farm income on record.

This morning, we got some more good news about our economy. Last month, America added 288,000 new jobs. The economy has overcome a lot because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We've overcome a lot because of good policy. Since last August, we've added 1.1 million new jobs. People are finding work in this country. The tax relief we passed is working.

This administration understands the role of Government is not to try to create wealth but an environment in which the small-business owner can grow to be a big business. We understand the importance of the entrepreneurial spirit and the importance of small-

business owners in our society. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small-business owners. And therefore, this pro—a progrowth plan we passed has focused on small businesses.

Today I met with Lynne Oyen. Lynne and her husband, Ken—Kevin—own an electrical supply company. It's a small business. It's a business that is creating new jobs. It's a business that's a Subchapter S corporation, which means they pay taxes at the individual income-tax level. Therefore, when you reduce income taxes on the individual, you're helping small businesses like Lynne's. Lynne is adding employees. Lynne is making investment decisions to expand our economy.

I want to thank you for coming, Lynne. Lynne and her husband represent the importance of stimulating growth amongst the small-business owners of the Iowa economy. And that's what we're doing through good policy.

As well we're helping individual families with good tax policy. We've got Greg and Lorie Foley with us today. They're right there. I appreciate them coming. Some of their neighbors are here. The Foleys—first of all, Greg was deployed for 10 months on active duty. I appreciate his service as a member of the Iowa National Guard.

Because the child credit went up and the marriage penalty went down and the 10-percent bracket was reduced because we reduced overall tax rates, this good family saved $2,200 on their taxes last year and this year—$2,200 in one year and $2,200 in the next year. Now, that may not seem like a lot for some of the folks in Washington, DC, but it's a lot for them. It's a lot of money in their pocket to help them do their duty as a mom and a dad. That extra money comes in handy. It comes in handy when you're having trouble making the bills. It comes in handy when times have been tough.

So I asked them, what are they going to do with the money. If they want to say, "None of your business," I would have understood that. [*Laughter*] Fortunately, they said—they told me what they're going to do. They're going to improve their house. See, they'll make their house better for their family. Now, when they make a decision to make their house better, somebody has got to provide the supplies to make the house better, which means somebody is more likely to find work at the place that's selling the supplies. And somebody that made the supplies, that sells the supplies, is more likely to be able to keep a job.

I said, "Greg, you going to do it yourself?" He said he didn't think so. He was going to hire somebody to come in and do it. So the person that comes in and helps remodel the home now has a little extra money in his pocket. That's the way the economy works. We stimulated the economy by letting these people keep more of their own money.

And now Congress is debating whether to make sure this tax relief stays in their pocket. See, if they don't make sure that child credit stays at $1,000 next year, these good folks' taxes are going up. They'll be—the Government will be taking money out of their pocket. We don't need to be doing that at this time in our—when the economy is starting to grow. See, the more money in people's pockets, the stronger this economy will be.

My opponent has a different view of that. He voted against every one of the tax measures that left more money in Greg and Lorie's pocket. He was a "no." And when it comes time to raising taxes, it's a lot easier to get a "yes" vote out of him. That's just his point of view. He voted to raise taxes over 350 times. He voted for raising the gas tax 11 times, and one time favored a tax increase of 50 cents a gallon.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, that would be a $5 or more increase on you every time you fill up your tank. You'd think with that amount of money, he'd at least throw in a free car wash. [*Laughter*]

We just have a different view. We have a different point of view of how this economy works. The reason I bring up his view on taxes is because, in a campaign, as you know, it's easy to make political promises. Now, we've been watching carefully, and we've been toting up the amount of money he's promised to spend if he happens to be elected. That's $1.9 trillion so far, and we're just getting started in the campaign. [*Laughter*] And if he had a history of voting on tax increases, you can understand where he is

going to get the money from. It's an important distinction in this campaign that people must understand. He said he's going to raise the money to pay for this by taxing the rich. We've heard that before, haven't we? The problem is you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for all those promises. So guess who is going to get to pay? You are. But we're not going to let him have that opportunity.

This country—the people of this country understand that we must not raise taxes right now. Raising taxes will undermine growth and destroy jobs. We need to keep taxes low. We should not raise taxes on the American people.

It is very important in this campaign for me to continue to lay out a vision of how America can be the most competitive country in the world, a good place to do business so people will be able to find work. That means a lot of things. It means we better have tort reform in this country. Frivolous and junk lawsuits make it awfully difficult for people to build their business. And part of that tort reform is medical liability reform so that we don't run up the cost of health care and run doctors out of business.

If we want to be competitive, if we want to be able to create jobs in the 21st century, we better get us an energy policy. We better get an energy plan. There's one stuck in the Congress. Here's what it ought to say: It should say we ought to encourage conservation. And we will. We ought to make sure we have alternative sources of energy. Listen, I'd love to be the President that says, "The corn crop is up," or "There's more soybeans than ever before, and that means there's more ethanol available and more biodiesel available." Listen, we ought to be, at some point in time, in a position to have alternative sources of energy.

And we also need to have clean coal technology. We ought to be having safe nuclear power. We ought to be using every ounce of our efforts to find more energy to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

The President has got to make sure that we're optimistic and confident in order for jobs to be created. That means we've got to reject what I call economic isolationism. Instead of shutting down markets and walling ourselves from the rest of the world, we ought to say to other nations, "Treat us like we treat you. See, you're able to sell your goods in our country. We want to be able to sell our goods into yours. Just give us a chance." Give our farmers a chance to compete, give our workers a chance to compete, give our entrepreneurs a chance to compete, and we can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime.

We're going to make sure education systems work. The No Child Left Behind Act is a solid piece of legislation, really good reform, because we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We're saying, "If you can't read, we're going to correct the reading problems early." We're not going to quit on any child. No, to make sure we're competitive in the 21st century, we've got to make sure our public school systems fulfill their functions, fulfill the goal of educating every child. And we've got to use our community college systems to make sure that we train workers for the jobs which actually exist, the jobs of the 21st century.

No, I can't wait to explain my vision for America, a vision that's got great faith in the entrepreneurs of our country, a vision that's got great faith in the workers of America, a vision that clearly says we will be competitive in the 21st century so our people can find work and we can compete. And the way to do that is through a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business economic agenda.

Our future also depends on America's leadership in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded, but they are not broken. Terrorists are testing our will in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weaknesses and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

This Nation is strong and confident in the cause of freedom, and today no friend or enemy doubts the word of the United States of America. America and our allies gave an

ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban chose defiance. The Taliban are no longer in power. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Iraq. The dictator chose defiance, and now the dictator sits in a prison cell.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget and our Nation must never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. In Iraq, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. The United States Congress looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapon programs. They did so, and we joined with them because we remembered the history of Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein professed hatred for America. Saddam Hussein had terrorist ties. Saddam Hussein paid suiciders to go into Israel to kill innocent Israeli citizens. Saddam Hussein attacked his neighbors. Saddam Hussein had used weapons of mass destruction not only against his neighbors but against his own people.

So the ultimatum was delivered. Saddam Hussein, as he had for decade—for a decade—chose defiance. So either I had to—I had a choice to make, see? I had to trust the word of a madman or take action to defend our country. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

My opponent admits that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He just didn't support my decision to remove Saddam from power. Maybe he was hoping Saddam would lose the next Iraqi election. [*Laughter*] We showed the dictator and a watching world that America means what it says. Because our coalition acted, Saddam's torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, Iraq's weapons programs are ended forever. Because we acted, nations like Libya have gotten the message and have voluntarily disarmed. Because we acted, an example of democracy is rising at the very heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more free, and America is more secure.

We've had a tough—tough weeks in Iraq. We face serious challenges. See, there's illegal militias and remnants of the regime who are joined by foreign terrorists. They're trying to take force by the power they can never gain by the ballot. That's what they're trying to do. They're trying to stop the advance of freedom. They can't stand freedom. They're trying to shake our will, is what they're trying to do. They don't understand our country. They don't understand our nature. They don't understand our resolve. America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins.

We have a clear strategy as this country heads toward democracy and freedom. First, we'll make sure the country is secure. We've got some fantastic troops over there, brave men and women who are—they're working with Iraqis so that the Iraqis can stand up and secure their own country at the right time. We're training people. They've got instructions, of course, to protect themselves at all costs. They've also got instructions, their timing, to take care of those who are trying to stop the advance of freedom, to make the country as secure as possible, because we're fixing to transfer sovereignty to the people of Iraq.

And that's the second phase of our strategy. There's a political strategy that we're now implementing. We put a schedule out there that says, "On June 30th, we'll transfer sovereignty." We will meet that schedule. When America says something, we will do it. The Iraqi people—by far, the vast majority of Iraqis reject the few who are trying to stop the advance of freedom. Iraqis want to run their own Government. Iraqis want to be self-governed, and we look forward to helping them be there.

The stakes are high. This is an historic opportunity to make the world a more free place and a peaceful place. Americans understand that free societies are peaceful societies. We also understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty's gift to each man and woman who lives in this world. It's hard work, but it is essential work. America will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

People in this country will have a clear choice when it comes to American security and national security. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world but only

if other countries do not object. [*Laughter*] I'm all for listening to other countries. I'm all for working with other countries. We put together coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq to spread freedom and peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to the leaders of other countries.

We also have a difference of opinion on the war on terror. My opponent said, "The war on terror is far less of a military operation and far more of an intelligence-gathering, law enforcement operation." I disagree—I disagree. Our Nation followed this approach after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. The matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled. But the enemy was still training. The enemy was still plotting. The enemy was drawing up more ambitious plans. After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. With those attacks, the terrorists and their allies declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got.

We'll give our troops the best equipment, best possible—for those of you who have got loved ones in the theater, I want to thank you for your service. You e-mail your guys and tell them the Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of what they're doing for the country.

I look forward to working with the Members of Congress to make sure our troops get the best. That's why I asked for and Congress supported the $87 billion supplemental last fall. That means we spent money to make sure our troops had the best. My opponent voted "no" on that issue, so I asked him to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Our troops don't need double talk. What they need is support, and I will support the troops.

Our men and women in the military have taken great risks, and they're doing great work. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. The abhorrent pictures on our TV screens have stained our honor. They do not reflect the nature of the men and women we have sent overseas. We've sent decent, compassioned, honorable, sacrificing citizens. I've seen their decency and unselfish courage. And I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

This Nation is prosperous, and it is strong. Yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. We're strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We will not stand for Government discrimination against people of faith.

We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We will not stand for any attempt to weaken those reforms and to send people back into lives of dependence.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We will not stand for the treatment of any life as a commodity to be experimented upon or exploited or cloned.

We stand for the confirmation of judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law. We will not stand for judges who undermine democracy by legislating from the bench or judges who try to remake the values of America by court order.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. We are changing the culture of America. All of us are helping to change the culture from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And in the responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves. No, the strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. These are not one of these times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high, when the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget the day. A fellow pointed at me and said, "Do not let me down." Workers in hardhats and police and firefighters were shouting, "Whatever it takes—whatever it takes." As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

In these times, I have also been witness to the character of this Nation. You know, not so long ago, some had doubts about our character. They questioned our capacity to meet a serious challenge or to serve a cause greater than self-interest, but Americans gave their answer. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We'll all need these qualitites for the work ahead. I'm here to ask for your help and ask for your vote because we have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. I'm here because I believe we have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. I'm here to ask for your help so we can make this country safer and stronger and better. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our great land, the best days lie ahead.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. God bless our great country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:54 a.m. at the Grand River Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Terry Duggan of Dubuque; country music entertainer Michael Martin Murphy; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks in Lancaster, Wisconsin

May 7, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for coming out. Come on, Laura. As you can see, I'm traveling with the A team of the Bush family. We're really glad to be here in Wisconsin, and I want to thank you all for coming out to say hello.

We're on a bus trip because I'm out asking for the vote. I'm here to tell the people of this State I'd like to be your President for 4 more years. And one of the best reasons why is to keep Laura as the First Lady for 4 years.

I'm not really here to politic you too much, but I do want you to know that I've got a plan to win this war on terror, and I've got a plan to spread freedom and peace. That's what I want to do. We're going to have to be tough in the years coming, and we've got to be compassionate too. This economy of ours is getting better. I hope the people in this part of the State are working. I know the farm economy is strong, and that's good for America. It's good for this part of Wisconsin.

I've got a plan to keep us going, so people can find work and realize their dreams. We got some good news today. They added—we added 288,000 new jobs last month. That's a good sign. Part of it has to do with making sure you get to keep more of your own money. That stimulus plan is working.

And finally, my job is to tap into the compassion of America. Let me tell you where the strength of the country is. The strength of the country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens, like the people living right here in Lancaster. That's the strength of this country, and for those of you who are—those of

you who are loving your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself, I'm here to thank you for that; thanking you for mentoring children; thanking you for feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless; thank you for hearing that universal call—that universal call to help change this country one heart and one soul at a time. My job is to rally the spirit of this great country, and that's what I'm—that's what I'm doing, traveling your great State.

I'm proud you're here, Mr. Mayor. Thanks for coming. Come on up here, Mr. Mayor. I always like to give the mayors advice. My advice is: Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming, Mayor.

[*Mayor Jerry Wehrle of Lancaster made brief remarks and presented the President with a key to the city.*]

The President. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thanks for coming.

Again, thank you all for coming out to say hello. We're kind of heading down the road, but before I leave I do want to say, I ask for God's blessings on you, and may God continue to bless our country.

Thank you. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:28 p.m. at the Grant County Courthouse Square. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

May 1

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

May 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He also had a telephone conversation with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to discuss the prison system in Iraq. Later, he met with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to South Bend, IN, arriving in the afternoon, where they began a bus tour. While en route to Niles, MI, aboard the bus, the President participated in an interview with representatives of regional media including the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit News, and Booth Newspapers.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Kalamazoo, MI. In the evening, they traveled to Sterling Heights, MI.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister John Howard of Australia to the White House on June 3.

May 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Maumee, OH, where he continued his bus tour. Later in the morning, he traveled to Dayton, OH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Lebanon, OH.

In the evening, the President traveled to Cincinnati, OH. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

May 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. He then met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore.

The President declared a major disaster in North Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and ground saturation beginning on March 26 and continuing.

May 6

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt to discuss their April 12 meeting at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, and the situation in the Middle East. He then had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Map Room, the President participated in an interview with Al-Ahram International newspaper.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ralph Leo Boyce to be Ambassador to Thailand.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Marshall Evans to be Ambassador to Armenia.

The President announced his intention to nominate John D. Rood to be Ambassador to the Bahamas.

The President announced his intention to nominate Craig T. Ramey to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gary D. Forsee and William H. Swanson as members of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

May 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Dubuque, IA, where they began a bus tour. Continuing the bus tour, they traveled to Lancaster, WI, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Prairie du Chien, WI, where they participated in a question-and-answer session at Cabela's Distribution Center. Later, they traveled to LaCrosse, WI, where they made remarks at a campaign rally.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Arkansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and landslides on April 19 and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted May 6

Ralph Leo Boyce, Jr.,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

John Marshall Evans,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Armenia.

John D. Rood,
of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Withdrawn May 6

Jose A. Fourquet,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2004, vice Mark L. Schneider, term expired, which were sent to the Senate on January 9, 2003, and on October 1, 2003.

Frederick W. Rohlfing III,
of Hawaii, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Hawaii, vice Alan C. Kay, retired, which was sent to the Senate on January 7, 2003.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released May 2

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Likud vote on Israeli Prime Minister

Sharon's plan to withdraw settlements from the Gaza

Released May 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by Prime Minister John Howard of Australia

Released May 4

Transcript of an interview of National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice by Al Arabiya

Released May 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to North Dakota

Released May 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Congratulates Countries Selected for the Millennium Challenge Account

Executive Summary: Report to the President From the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba

Fact sheet: Report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba

Released May 7

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice at Michigan State University commencement

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1904, S. 2022, and S. 2043

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Arkansas

Acts Approved by the President

Approved May 7

S. 1904 / Public Law 108–225
To designate the United States courthouse located at 400 North Miami Avenue in Miami, Florida, as the "Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. United States Courthouse"

S. 2022 / Public Law 108–226
To designate the Federal building located at 250 West Cherry Street in Carbondale, Illinois the "Senator Paul Simon Federal Building"

S. 2043 / Public Law 108–227
To designate a Federal building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as the "Ronald Reagan Federal Building"

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